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IT'S EASTER: HE IS RECUT (BY MEL)
Richard Goldstein

SCHIAVO AND THE POLITICS OF DEATH
Patricia J. Willians

THE ELITE TURN PROTECTIONIST
William Greider

PATRIOTISM IS NONPARTISAN
George McGovern

IAN McEWAN'S 9/11
Lee Siegel

HUGO CHAVEZ, PETRO POPULIST

WHAT VENEZUELA'S REVOLUTION IS MADE OF

by CHRISTIAN PARENTI

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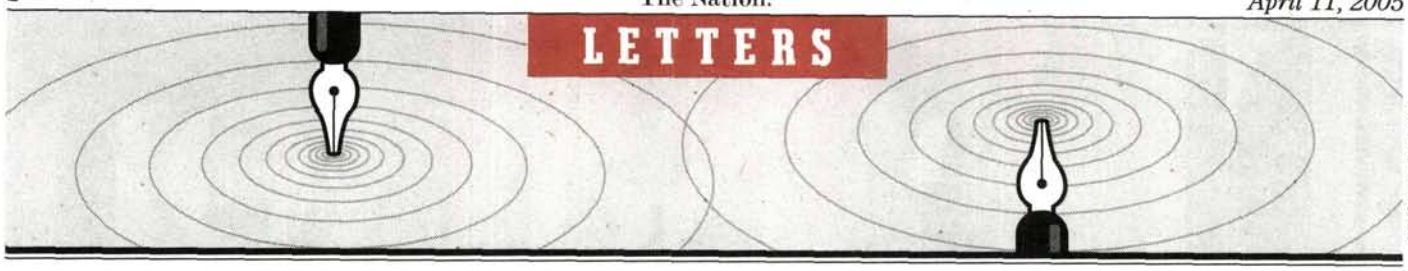

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

TRUE PROPHETS

Atlanta

■ In these times of imperial overreach and the erosion of constitutional protections, there is plenty of reason, as Arthur Miller once wrote, to "tear at our collars and get red in the face" ["Arthur Miller," March 7].

Framed on my wall is a yellowed *New York Times* article written by Miller just before the 1972 election—words that resonate today. Speaking to the reasons George McGovern's candidacy "hasn't caught fire," he concludes, "What this tells about our inner attitudes, I think, is that we are far more apprehensive than we are confident of ourselves; and that what we want in a political leader is enough larceny, enough insensitivity to permit him to do our dirty work for us, to fight dirty in a dirty world."

The leading players may have changed, but the plot line hasn't. I take comfort in the knowledge that Miller's work will never cease to embolden and inspire, while the exhortations of the false prophets who pass for leaders in today's arena will be relegated to oblivion.

BARBARA ALLEN KENNEY

PENSION FUND SUPERHEROES

Tucson

■ I am a Libertarian and a financial planner. I disagree with your politics on almost every issue. But William Greider's "The New Colossus" [Feb. 28], on pension funds' muscle, was brilliant. One thing I agree with is using financial clout to advance your agenda. We as financial planners and mutual fund investors are told to keep out of corporate governance. But by using your voting power, you have as much power as a major stockholder. That brings more voices to the table and will, one hopes, limit corporate malfeasance. I fully agree with your right to influence these companies through the private sector, not through additional government regulations. By doing so, you are part of the party as opposed to a party crasher. The reforms will most likely be more efficient than silly government regulation. And if your reforms are stupid, you will be held accountable. JOE DAVEY

Los Angeles

■ William Greider accurately portrays the increasingly important role of public employee pension funds like California's CalPERS (assets of $180 billion) and CalSTRS (assets of $125 billion) in addressing corporate malfeasance, from climate change to slave labor. Greider omits another important role: Public funds are now serving as "lead plaintiffs" in a host of securities fraud cases, many arising from the meltdown of companies like Enron, WorldCom, QWEST, AOL Time Warner and HealthSouth.

Ten years ago, one of the few provisions of the GOP "Contract With America" that actually became law was the Private Securities Law Reform Act (PSLRA). The "reform" legislation was written largely by and for powerful Wall Street interests, to impose obstacles to prosecution of securities fraud cases [see Greider, "William Lerach's Legal Crusade Against Enron and Infectious Greed," Aug. 5/12, 2002]. One provision has followed the law of unintended consequences. Under the PSLRA, shareholders who have suffered the greatest losses because of fraud are made "lead plaintiffs" and given broad powers to run class-action litigation. Public and labor pension funds have now stepped forward to serve as lead plaintiffs in hundreds of such cases. They have not only already recovered billions for their retirees and shareholders but also have changed corporate behavior.

As Greider points out, corporate America is responding in force. Backed by special interests and millions of their dollars, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is threatening a ballot measure that would privatize public-employee pension funds. The measure would prevent teachers, firefighters, police and other public servants from having traditional pensions and compel them to invest in the market through 401(k)-like devices. According to CalPERS and CalSTRS, the startup alone of this plan would cost California taxpayers billions. Similar measures have been introduced in eight other states.

And just who would be the real winners of this "reform"? Wall Street would be swimming in new money; brokers would be positioned to receive billions just in commissions.

AL MEYERHOFF, MICHAEL PERRI

Amherst, Mass.

■ William Greider neglects to mention the obstacles the Bush Administration's SEC has erected to pension funds' and other investors' fundamental right to know the risks environmental hazards pose to their portfolios. In 2002 the Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment filed a petition urging the SEC to improve its guidelines on corporate disclosure of environmental liabilities. The Rose petition had the endorsement of institutional investors and foundations representing more than $1 trillion in assets. They assert that they need this information for sound investment decisions. Yet the SEC has refused to issue the needed guidance.

In 2004 and '05, SEC staff began excluding from corporate proxy statements any shareholder proposal that demands disclosure of future risks such as global warming and chemical pollution. On February 23, it told Dow Chemical, which acquired Union Carbide in 2001, that it need not have its shareholders vote on a proposed shareholder resolution asking management to report on financial and reputational risks stemming from Union Carbide's 1984 Bhopal disaster.

SANFORD LEWIS
Strategic Counsel on Corporate Accountability

TRUE PROFITS

West Bridgewater, Mass.

■ As a progressive, for-profit social change organization, we were pleased to see Michael H. Shuman and Merrian Fuller's "Profits for Justice" [Jan. 24]. When we were dreaming up our organization in the mid-1980s we debated many of the pros and cons discussed by the authors, and the choice to be a for-profit, worker cooperative was a close call. We wanted to be organized democratically, so we chose a worker cooperative structure. We wanted the needs of our farmer suppliers to be protected, so we committed ourselves to buying only on fair trade terms. We wanted to protect the social mission, so we crafted our by-laws and capital structure to prevent selling out or hostile takeovers. And we wanted to demonstrate that business could be viable while advancing these goals, so we chose to be a for-profit, competing in the marketplace with conventional for-profit corporations.

The marketplace is a hotbed of imitation. If you can take a progressive cause (fair trade, organics, responsible investing, etc.) and show that there's a market for it, imitators will pop up all around, multiplying your impact. Yet despite our progress over twenty years, we've only scratched the surface, and the marketplace can use every progressive-minded entrepreneur it can get.

RINK DICKINSON, *president*
Equal Exchange

Bozeman, Mt.

■ From reading "Profits for Justice," one would presume the American Independent Business Alliance, which I direct, is just one in a long line of entities that have promoted "socially responsible" or "sustainable" business, based on the notion that a world dominated by corporations can be humane and sustainable if we can just get corporations to be nice. But AMIBA is a completely different model, promoting independent ownership of businesses (including co-ops and worker-owned ones) at the local level and providing tools for communities to stop corporate chains from driving out local business. The Independent Business Alliance model has proved successful in numerous communities, but to reach the numbers required to shift national consciousness, dialogue and policy, AMIBA is pursuing foundation support and unfortu-

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EDITORIALS

Democrats: MIA

After giving George W. Bush far too easy a ride in his first term, the Democratic leadership in Congress promised that the second term was going to be different. "This is not a dictatorship," announced Senate minority leader Harry Reid. The new head of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, Illinois Representative Rahm Emanuel, declared, "The President neither has the mandate he thinks he has nor a majority to make policy." But three months of watching the Democrats' stumbling, often incoherent responses to Administration appointments and initiatives shows clearly that the party is making the same mistakes that cost it so dearly in the 2002 and 2004 elections.

It's easy simply to blame the GOP majorities in the Senate and House when bad legislation passes those chambers. But too frequently it has been Democratic disorder rather than Republican treachery that has made possible the Bush White House's legislative victories. That's what happened with the mid-March Senate vote on a budget amendment that would have protected the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Seven Republican senators voted to protect ANWR from oil drilling. Had the Democratic caucus simply held firm in support of the amendment, it would have won by a 52-to-48 margin. But three Democrats—Daniel Akaka and Daniel Inouye of Hawaii and Mary Landrieu of Louisiana—broke ranks to back the Administration. All three had their excuses, and if this had been the only bill on which Democrats failed to hold together, it might not be a cause for serious concern. But this is hardly an isolated example of Democrats doing the bidding of the President and the special interests that support him.

Consider the February Senate vote on tort "reform," another issue on which Democrats are supposed to be the defenders of the common good against the rapacious Republicans. The battle lines could not have been clearer: Bush and his allies wanted to limit sharply the ability of citizens to file class-action lawsuits against corporations that injure or defraud them. A united Democratic opposition in the Senate could have mounted a populist challenge that might well have won GOP allies for a fight to preserve the sovereignty of state courts, which will be lost under the legislation. Instead, Democrats helped give Bush the first major legislative victory of his second term. Only twenty-six Senate Democrats opposed the proposal, while eighteen—including serial compromisers Joe Lieberman and Evan Bayh and some who ought to know better, like Charles Schumer and Jay Rockefeller—sided with the GOP. It was just as bad in the House, where fifty Democrats—including Rahm ("no mandate") Emanuel—backed the bill, handing Bush an easy win that provides momentum for an agenda that includes proposals to restrict asbestos litigation and curb medical malpractice suits.

Even more disappointing was the mid-March vote on legislation designed to make it harder for middle-class and poor Americans to declare personal bankruptcy, leaving crooked companies like Enron free to declare bankruptcy themselves and thus be protected from claims like those by employees who lost their pensions. The vote on the measure, which had been blocked for years by such progressive Democrats as the late Paul Wellstone and a timely veto from then–President Bill Clinton, passed by an overwhelming 74-to-25 vote. Eighteen Democrats—including Reid and key players like Joseph Biden of Delaware and Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico—aligned themselves with the President and the credit card companies that wrote and promoted the bill.

Apologists for these egregious compromises would have us believe that Democrats, as a minority party, have little leverage. But the Social Security debate belies such claims; with Democrats sticking together against privatization, it is the Republicans who have found themselves under pressure to compromise. The same

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goes for the Democratic refusal to give ground on ethics issues, which has done so much to increase pressure on scandal-plagued House majority leader Tom DeLay. Unfortunately, shows of solidarity on Social Security and ethics issues represent the exception rather than the rule when it comes to checking and balancing the White House and its Congressional allies. Again and again Democrats have failed the basic tests of an opposition party. They couldn't muster the forty votes needed to mount a Senate filibuster against Alberto Gonzales's nomination for Attorney General, only twelve Democrats opposed the nomination of Condoleezza Rice for Secretary of State and none opposed the nomination of Michael Chertoff to head the Department of Homeland Security, despite concerns about Rice and Chertoff that were as troubling as those regarding Gonzales's role in approving torture.

House Democrats have been even less effective in their opposition than their Senate colleagues. Despite polls showing that the vast majority of Americans opposed federal intervention in the Terri Schiavo right-to-die case, only fifty-three Democrats opposed DeLay's move to override Florida state law and judicial rulings in a rush to satisfy the demands of the GOP's most extreme constituencies. Only thirty-six opposed the Broadcast Decency Enforcement Act, which Representative Jan Schakowsky correctly identified as a move to "put Big Brother in charge of deciding what is art and what is free speech." And just thirty-nine rejected the Administration's demand for another $81.4 billion to maintain the occupation of Iraq and related military misadventures.

In 2002 and 2003 the Democrats tried the strategy of giving the President blank checks for the invasion and occupation of Iraq and then criticizing how the President spent them. That strategy cost the Democrats any chance to frame the debate about the war and ultimately cost them at the polls. But while some individual Democrats, like California Representative Henry Waxman, have come to recognize the folly of such an approach, the party as a whole continues to cede too much ground to the President—on Iraq and on most other issues.

Perhaps being shamed publicly, and being pressured by the grassroots, will help Congressional Democrats get their act together. Toward that end, we've initiated a biweekly "Minority/Majority" feature that identifies—by name—Democrats who give succor to the GOP. (It also praises those who've helped the cause of Democrats becoming the majority party again.) If Democrats don't define themselves as an effective opposition soon, they could end up being an ineffective one for a long time to come.

The Schiavo Hypocrites

With their handling of the heart-wrenching Terri Schiavo case, George W. Bush and his Republican allies in tragedy exploitation were awash in the currency of Washington: hypocrisy. The party that has looked to cut Medicaid services to millions of poor Americans (to close a budget gap caused in part by tax cuts for the well-off) dramatically recalled all its House members to Washington to decry what it disingenuously claimed was a denial of care to one person who has been in a severely brain-damaged state for fifteen years. Self-proclaimed

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COMMENT

conservatives who denounce outcome-oriented judicial activism at the drop of a gavel pushed through arguably unconstitutional legislation aimed at short-circuiting court rulings and at achieving a specific decision. Bush, who as Texas governor signed a bill allowing spouses and guardians to "withdraw life-sustaining treatment" from patients who cannot communicate their wishes, returned from vacation (something he didn't do in August 2001, when terrorism warnings were "blinking red," according to the CIA) to declare to his right-wing fans, "It is always wise to err on the side of life." (Tell that to Karla Faye Tucker.) Senate majority leader Bill Frist, a heart specialist presumably familiar with medical ethics, maintained that he could diagnose Schiavo, by watching a video several years old, more accurately than neurologists who've examined her in person. Tom DeLay, who is battling ethics problems, claimed that Schiavo required his crusading attention, although a guardian appointed by Florida Governor Jeb Bush had concluded in 2003 that the Florida judicial system "has done its job well" and that experts had found "within a high degree of medical certainty, that Theresa is in a persistent vegetative state."

This has not been a battle over what conservatives call the "culture of life." It has been a fight over the culture of law, the culture of privacy and the culture of personal autonomy. Guardians and medical experts render life-ending decisions every day. In fact, a hospital in Houston recently removed the breathing tube from a 6-month-old boy born with a fatal disease, against his mother's wishes. DeLay didn't sic Congress on the hospital. He and his cohorts intervened in the Schiavo matter because religious-right activists had turned it into a cause célèbre. To whip up their crowd, House speaker Dennis Hastert, DeLay and Frist inserted the federal government into a painful family conflict.

It has been anguishing to watch the struggle within Schiavo's family. But, as conservatives are fond of saying, not every problem requires intervention from Washington. The Florida courts over the course of years worked through the thorny case and applied the relevant laws. Experts were consulted, medical and legal evidence reviewed. Most Americans seem to agree with that approach. Large majorities, even among evangelicals, oppose Congressional intervention. Politics and state-endorsed religion have no room in our private lives, despite what is being said by the self-righteous hypocrites in Washington.

COMMENT

Missing WMD Report

When is a priority not a priority? When it's after the election.

Last July the Senate Intelligence Committee released a much-anticipated report on the prewar intelligence on weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. The study concluded that the intelligence community—led by the CIA—had "overstated" and "mischaracterized" the intelligence on Iraq's (nonexistent) WMDs. The massive report repeatedly detailed instances when the intelligence services botched the job by ignoring contrary evidence, embracing questionable sources and rushing to judgments that just happened to fit the preconceived notions of the Bush Administration. "What the President and the Congress used to send the country to war was information that was...flawed," declared Pat Roberts, the Republican chairman of the committee. Jay Rockefeller, the committee's senior Democrat, noted that the report outlined "one of the most devastating...intelligence failures in the history of the nation."

But the committee's report did not cover a crucial area: how the Bush Administration used—or abused—the prewar intelligence to build support for the Iraq invasion. Roberts claimed his committee was hot on that trail: "It is one of my top priorities," he said. The problem, he explained, was that there was not enough time before the November election to complete the assignment. Rockefeller took issue with that and complained that the "central issue of how intelligence was...exaggerated by Bush Administration officials" was being relegated into a "Phase II" investigation that would not begin until after the election. A Democratic committee staffer said that such an inquiry could easily be completed within months.

Still, Roberts succeeded in his transparent effort to kick that inconvenient can down the road. (Imagine the headache for the Bush campaign if news stories appeared before the election reporting that the committee had found Bush had stretched an already stretched truth.) Now—with Bush re-elected—Roberts no longer considers Phase II a priority. In mid-March, Roberts declared further investigation pointless. He noted that if his committee asked Bush officials whether they had overstated or mischaracterized prewar intelligence, they'd simply claim their statements had been based on "bum intelligence." Roberts remarked, "To go though that exercise, it seems to me, in a postelection environment—we didn't see how we could do that and achieve any possible progress. I think everybody pretty well gets it." Gets what, precisely? The evidence is strong that Bush and his aides overstated the overstated intelligence. One example: Bush claimed that Iraq possessed stockpiles of biological weapons, yet the CIA reported only that Saddam had an active biological weapons R&D program. (It turns out he had neither stockpiles nor an active program.) The question

CALVIN TRILLIN

ORANGE ALERTS

You know the things I miss so much it hurts?
Those orange alerts.
Routines, our leaders said—and this was strange—
Should not be changed:
If we stayed home, or stopped what we'd begun,
The bad guys won.
No, we were only told to be prepared
For being scared.
And when will it return—this orange protection?
The next election.

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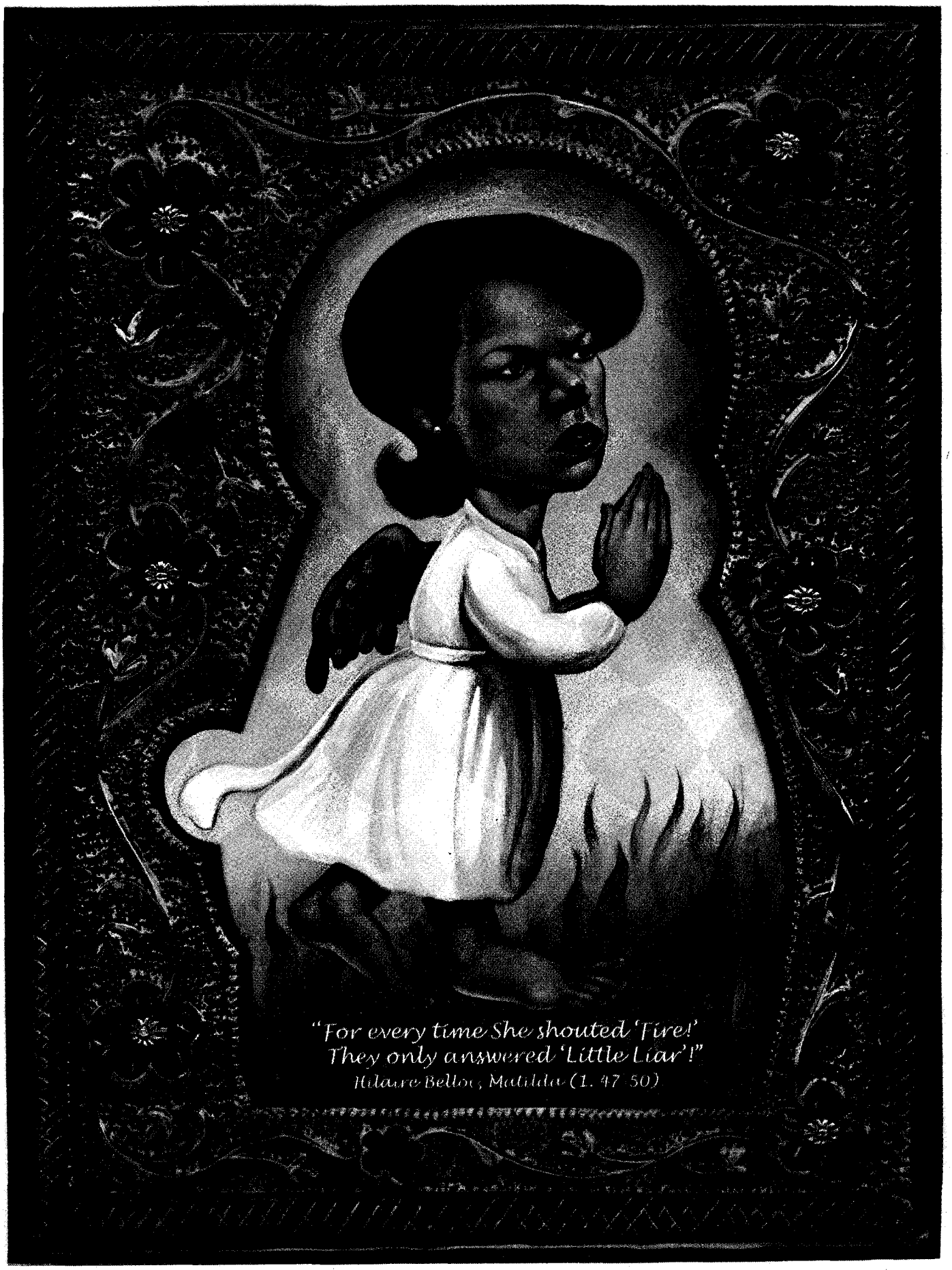

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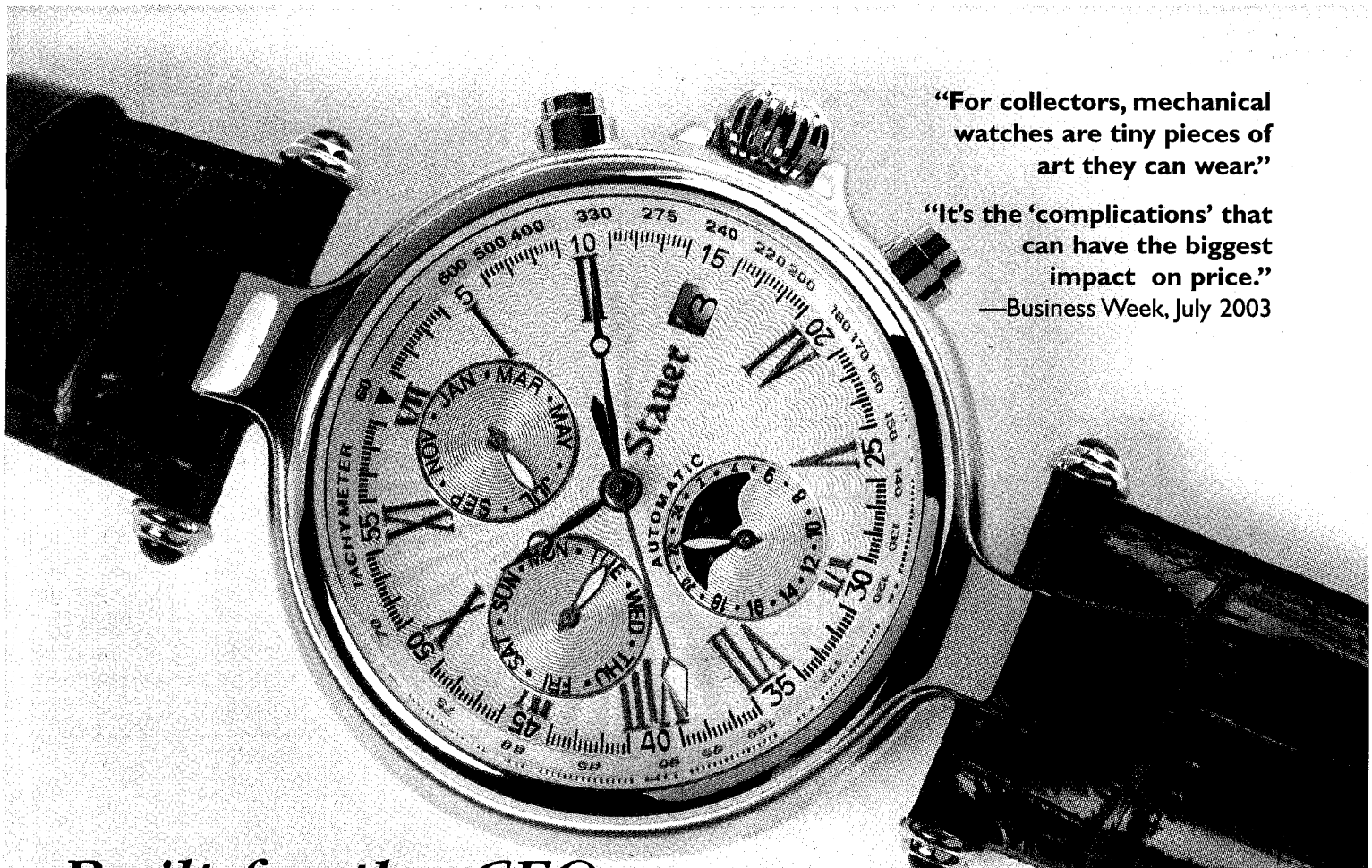

"For collectors, mechanical watches are tiny pieces of art they can wear."

"It's the 'complications' that can have the biggest impact on price."
—Business Week, July 2003

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COMMENT

is, How and why did Bush and his lieutenants come to exaggerate exaggerations? And just because the answer is obvious doesn't mean an investigation is unwarranted.

While Roberts has dismissed the need for Phase II, Rockefeller has been trying to push the investigation forward. But the committee has not yet bothered to interview any Administration officials about the use of prewar intelligence. The committee also appears to be stymied by obstacles it encountered last year while pursuing a matter to be included in the Phase II inquiry: the actions of the Office of Special Plans. The OSP was a neocon-linked, maverick intelligence shop in the Pentagon set up to search for intelligence (good or bad) to support the case for war. Phase II was supposed to determine whether the OSP had operated appropriately. But when committee staff were probing the OSP last year, people connected to it began hiring lawyers and clamming up, and the committee had a hard time prying documents from the Pentagon. "We received documents up to a point," comments a Rockefeller aide. "Then it stopped. The issue for us became whether to wrap up the investigation on the basis of what we got, or to try to get more information." Roberts, however, has signaled he's no longer interested in the OSP inquiry. "We sort of came to a crossroads, and that is basically on the back burner," he said recently. So stonewalling works.

It would not tax the committee to compare the prewar assertions of Bush officials with the intelligence it had been provided. Apparently the commission Bush appointed last year (under pressure) to examine WMD intelligence has not been performing this task. The preliminary signs are that this commission, due to issue a report soon, will focus on inadequacies of intelligence related to present and potential WMD threats, such as Iran and North Korea.

When the intelligence committee released its report last summer, I asked Roberts if the public and relatives of US troops killed in Iraq deserved to know "whether this Administration handled intelligence matters adequately and made statements that were justified." He replied, "I have made my commitment, and it will be done." His promise was—oh-so shocking!—nothing but a maneuver to protect

In Fact . . .

SHAKING UP THE UN

■ Our UN correspondent Ian Williams writes: Kofi Annan has unveiled what his spokesman rightly calls a "doable" set of reforms. Those that will attract the most attention, such as a proposed enlargement of the Security Council, are not necessarily the most important. Indeed, there is also a danger that the developing nations—particularly the African states—encouraged by the media, will get bogged down in the question of who sits on the Security Council rather than addressing the more important questions of what the council and the General Assembly should do about major issues like security, poverty, development, AIDS and malaria. In an attempt to win global support Annan offered something for everyone on human rights, democracy, terrorism security and development. He envisions a Human Rights Council that would be smaller and more effective than the current model and that would exclude repeat offenders from membership. However, he may have been too trusting of the Bush Administration's claims of concern about democracy and human rights, given recent appointments establishing the dominance of the faith-based faction, with its reflexive antipathy to all multilateral endeavors. The White House may seize on Annan's call for nations to commit 0.7 percent of their GDP to overseas aid and for renewal of the Kyoto Protocol as excuses to renege on US rhetoric about democracy and human rights. The make-or-break date for the proposals will be September, when there will be a global summit for heads of state to celebrate the UN's sixtieth anniversary.

CONGRESS STRIKES OUT

■ The Congressional hearings on steroid use in baseball turned into an orgy of self-promotion as committee members told gushy stories about their love of the game. After eight hours of this, six subpoenaed multimillionaires delivered pointless testimony. Home-run champ Mark McGwire promised to use his influence to discourage kids from taking steroids and told the committee, "What I will not do, however, is participate in naming names and implicating my friends and teammates." Although slammed for stonewalling questions about his own drug use, McGwire took a position in the tradition of noncooperating witnesses in the witch-hunting 1950s who refused to implicate others for personal advantage. And José Canseco, who wrote a tell-all about big leaguers' drug use, inherited the role of money-grubbing snitch.

MEET THE ARTIST

■ Canadian artist Anita Kunz (www.anitakunz.com), who drew this week's "Comix Nation," has appeared in magazines worldwide, including *Time*, *Rolling Stone* and *The New Yorker*.

ON THE WEB

■ David Corn explains why Paul Wolfowitz's nomination to be the next World Bank president is a win for the Pentagon but a loss for the world. Plus, Michael Blanding highlights the student movement against Coca-Cola (www.thenation.com).

MINORITY/MAJORITY

■ **Permanent Minority.** Six Senate Democrats joined Republicans in voting against a measure to preserve soldiers' minimum bankruptcy protections from debts incurred when they leave better-paying jobs for service in Iraq.

■ **Toward the Majority.** West Virginia Representative Alan Mollohan is sponsoring a resolution to force the GOP to restore ethics rules it gutted earlier this year. The resolution, which is peeling off some GOP support, would allow the ethics committee to proceed with an investigation of corruption allegations against majority leader Tom DeLay.

—David Sirota

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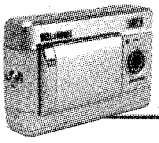
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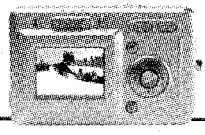
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COMMENT

Bush's backside. Rockefeller and other Democrats are insisting Phase II be carried out. But Bush may benefit from the attempted cover-up. A President doesn't have to worry about troubling answers if no one asks the questions. DAVID CORN

It's Easter: He Is Recut

No flaying below the belt: That's the guiding principle behind the kinder, gentler version of Mel Gibson's biblical blood fest, which has hit the cineplex in time for the Easter season. Aptly called *The Passion Recut*, it is six minutes shorter due to a trimming of gore that, Gibson hopes, will make it easier to take "your grandmother or some of your older kids." There's still plenty of scourging for these gentle souls to gasp at, and the blood libel remains intact. The Jewish priest Caiphas is a hook-nosed villain, while Pontius Pilate is a confused but decent man (hardly the despot who was recalled from his command because he was so vicious). But anti-Semitism is not the reason this film has grossed more than $600 million, and that issue has deflected attention from its real impact.

Perhaps because they are reluctant to seem like the liberals they are, most mainstream critics have ignored *The Passion*'s political agenda. But the film is a very effective social tract. It sanctifies all the hallmarks of what George Lakoff calls the "strict father" model of politics—the punitive, self-righteous, martial style of Republican machismo. There are few Kumbaya moments in this film; the message of universal love is all but suppressed by a Manichean worldview that perfectly suits the Bush doctrine of US power, and the climactic image of Christ striding forth from his tomb to the sound of drums is a prototype of shock and awe. Bible films in more liberal eras focus on the struggle of Jesus rather than the suffering, but in Gibson's gospel the theme of persecution and retribution is front and center, as it is for the religious right. We can see how the GOP has harnessed this consciousness. Indeed, *The Passion of the Christ* served as a template for the Bush campaign.

The original version was released in February 2004, just as the public was beginning to focus on the presidential election. The ingenious idea of mobilizing churches to support the film coincided with Karl Rove's evangelical organizing strategy. The secular media's objections became a rallying cry for Christian soldiers, who marched to the box office and onward to the polls, where they voted in record numbers. Perhaps the most decisive development was the alliance between Catholic and Protestant social conservatives that worked so well for Bush, especially among Latinos. *The Passion* was a building block of that popular front. By combining elements of Catholic Marianism and strict-father Protestantism, Gibson created an icon for this communion at the ballot box. Given his success, I would call *The Passion* the most important work of political art of our time. No movie has been so effective at glorifying a hateful ideology since *The Birth of a Nation*.

This is not to say that Gibson's film is remotely as dangerous as D.W. Griffith's racist epic was. When that film, with its odious imagery of venal Negroes and heroic Klansmen, opened in 1915, Woodrow Wilson raved that it was "history written with lightning," and in the years that followed, the Klan grew exponentially. Nothing that extreme is happening today, and the President hasn't made a peep about *The Passion*. It's too soon to say how the film will influence the course of American politics, but one thing is already clear: By showing the dollar sign of the cross, Gibson has made a mark on entertainment.

You'd think fundamentalist doxy would be too parochial for network TV. But beginning April 13, NBC will broadcast *Revelations*, a six-part miniseries based on the book of the same name. It's the latest attempt to capture the market for those Left Behind novels without their exclusionary sting. Call it Apocalypse-lite. If this trend takes hold, it could help normalize the values of the Christian right by making them cool. Imagine a high-tech hero with an intense feeling of persecution, an authoritarian view of God and country, a revulsion toward secular humanism and an end-of-days obsession. This born-again Mad Max could be coming to a theater near you.

In fact, if Gibson has his way, he might be a Jew. For Mel the Evangelist's next sermon, he's contemplating a film about the Maccabees (based on a book by Howard Fast, no less). This is not the Hanukkah story most of us know, but a tale of fundamentalist Israelites fighting the relativism and sensuality of a Hellenistic conqueror who happens to be based in Syria. And the Maccabees have another target: Hellenized Hebrews, whom they regard as an enemy within. Imagine this film appearing in a nation beset by economic crisis and terrorist attacks. If that grim world comes to pass, we could see the full realization of Gibson's vision. The time may come when we look upon him as a father of faith-based fascism. RICHARD GOLDSTEIN

Richard Goldstein writes about the intersection of culture, politics and sexuality.

Elite Protectionists

A man-bites-dog story of momentous implications is unfolding in Washington: The US multinational establishment, having successfully championed free-trade orthodoxy for decades, may now be flirting with protectionist heresy—a stiff tariff against China to stanch America's hemorrhaging trade deficits. Fred Bergsten, the multinationals' leading economic authority, warns that the United States is in "big trouble," taking on foreign debt beyond anything any industrial nation has experienced and comparable to Mexico and Thailand just before they crashed in the 1990s. Bergsten, director of the Institute for International Economics, is lobbying elite circles to demand decisive action by the Bush Administration—an "import surcharge" as high as 50 percent on all Chinese imports—to avert financial meltdown.

Meantime, a bipartisan group of senators—nine Democrats, five Republicans—has introduced Senate Bill 295, which targets China with a 27.5 percent tariff. Charles Schumer, the lead sponsor, calls it "a tough-love effort." The co-sponsors include Democratic minority leader Harry Reid and, more surprising, Hillary Clinton, a longtime free trader close to financial leaders like former Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, now an executive at Citigroup. The bill lets politicians express solidarity with

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COMMENT

constituents who lost their jobs, without offending big hitters.

Conceivably, we could be witnessing the start of a break from the era of US-led globalization in which Washington preached unfettered trade to the rest of the world. Now it is America that needs protection, its trade deficits swollen to more than $600 billion a year, its capital borrowing from abroad approaching 7 percent of GDP. Bergsten predicts that, unless there is dramatic action, the deficits will keep rising until something truly awful happens to the US economy and, therefore, the global economy too.

Bergsten, Assistant Treasury Secretary in the Carter Administration, is a high-church free trader offended by the protectionist label. His institute's board of directors includes heavyweights from Citigroup, Morgan, United Technologies, ChevronTexaco and the Carlyle Group, plus former Federal Reserve chairman Paul Volcker, David Rockefeller and Jean-Claude Trichet. Alan Greenspan is listed as an "honorary director." Improbable as it sounds, Bergsten insists he is freelancing this explosive proposition. "The big companies and financial firms are not goosing China," he told me. "They all like the status quo and are very much in disagreement." He does acknowledge, however, heightened anxiety among financiers about America's swollen debt position. The declining dollar has not reversed the US trade deficits, as experts like Bergsten had predicted, and it must fall much further to do so. "Wall Street," Bergsten explains, "faces a risk of precipitous decline—an overshooting free fall that would shatter confidence, drive US interest rates toward double digits and crash equities à la Black Monday in 1987."

The multinational club does not intend to abandon free-trade dogma. Bergsten's strategy—threatening tariffs—is meant to bluff China and other Asian nations into letting their currencies appreciate and allowing the dollar to fall much further so the US trade deficits will shrink, at least enough to avert a financial crisis. The strategy is also designed to light a fire under George W. Bush. "It is virtually inconceivable," Bergsten wrote in the *Financial Times*, "that the Bush Administration could skate through four more years without addressing these issues decisively." In a sense, Bush is being handed a weapon to use to intimidate the trading partners: Work out a deal with us or protectionist politics may engulf us all.

Schumer's bill provides for a six-month negotiating period—time enough for Beijing to relent—before the ax would fall (other Asian nations can't move on currencies unless China does because they'd lose their own export sales to Chinese goods). Bergsten has worked out a clever but strained rationale for how his import surcharge defends free trade: China and the others, he says, are manipulating their currencies to gain trading advantage. But all important nations manage their currencies for economic advantage; furthermore, during the 1990s, American experts encouraged developing nations to peg their currency to the dollar, exactly what China's doing now. Bergsten argues that the United States should take his accusation to the IMF and WTO, but the threat seems hollow since such a case would take years. The bleeding is now.

Waving the tariff "stick" to pressure others can be risky, however. When Bergsten presented his case before the Council on Foreign Relations in February, financier and former Commerce Secretary Pete Peterson sounded in agreement but cited the risks.

(Continued on Page 32)

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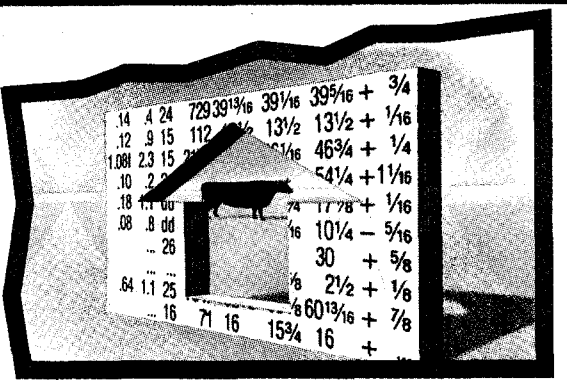

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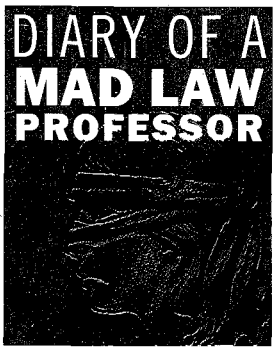
PATRICIA J. WILLIAMS

Habeas Corpus



There was an article in *The New York Times Magazine* not long ago about people who collect hyperrealistic "reborn" dolls. Reborning, we're told, "is the name that has emerged for a curious process of altering and enhancing a baby doll to look and even to feel as much like a human baby as possible." People are stockpiling these creations with visible veins and umbilical stumps, with the expectation that the dolls might "fill a void" or "recapture a happy time." They dress them up and "pose them in different ways" and reminisce about their children or those they never had. "Some collectors have whole rooms set aside as a nursery," according to the *Times*.

This puppetry for selfish ends is not too far removed, I think, from the bizarre events played out in the name of force-feeding Terri Schiavo, a woman whose bulimic aversion to food was extreme enough to induce a massive systemic crisis that left her in what doctors describe as a "persistent vegetative state." Her inscrutable silence has become a canvas for projected social anxieties. Is she an innocent life pulsing bravely against the odds, or an exhausted shell of a body whose last will was to be allowed a death with dignity? Is pulling the plug on a terminal patient the exact moral equivalent of plugging in the electric chair? Is her husband really acting as executor of her will or engineering her execution? What, if any, is the national interest—the federal case—in allowing an appeal from a procedurally unassailable state court finding that Schiavo didn't want to endure a machine-driven life? Are doctors who maintain that "brain damage" is a biological phenomenon denying that miracles are possible and "voting for death"? Letting nature take its course has never been so freighted.

Terri Schiavo's case is particularly hard because the people who knew her best cannot agree. But if nothing else is certain at this point it is that her cause has been hijacked by politicians—it's abortion! euthanasia! eugenics! anything but Tom DeLay's ethics, or torture in Iraq! It has turned into a messy public legislation of what was already a messy enough private tragedy capped off by the unprecedented bill to allow federal courts to review the state court decision, signed with a flourish by George W. Bush, who interrupted his vacation for the apparent purpose of resurrecting her just in time for Easter.

If it seems like a contradiction from those who so recently embraced states' rights, it also begins to appear that that commitment was less about principle than an instrumentalist backlash to the civil rights movement. These days, that backlash is perhaps more tidily coordinated at the federal level. For example, the recent restraints passed by Congress that require most class actions for claims under state law to be brought in federal court was widely touted as a way to rein in medical malpractice or tobacco cases. But the restraints also affect a huge range of consumer-protection and -fraud cases, employee-rights cases and gender-, age- and race-discrimination cases. This means that state civil rights laws, many of which are more expansively protective than federal civil rights laws, will now be enforceable mostly in federal courts by judges who, given their very position on the federal bench, have little discretion to interpret state law with any but the narrowest standards of review. Similarly, the bill that gave Schiavo's parents a onetime individual right to sue in federal court would, if it became a general law, turn the medical disposition of other "innocent," "terrorized" passive bodies—think fetuses—over to the federal courts for final determination.

There are other institutional consequences at stake in this debate, however. Much has been made in the late hours of the debate of the apparent inconsistency between Bush and the Christian right's support for HB 701, the so-called Florida Starvation and Dehydration of Persons With Disabilities Prevention Act (or "Terri's Law") and Bush's 1999 signature, while governor, on the Texas Futile Care Law, which allows the state to remove life support despite wishes of family or guardians, where independent review determines that such support is "futile." But if you look past the florid contrast of their elaborate handles and actually compare the two laws, the language is essentially the same; both create an initial presumption of medical intervention where the patient does not have a living will, but both create a significant exception—to wit, the presumption does not apply where, in hospital judgment, the treatment is not possible or where it would hasten death or where it "would not contribute to sustaining the incompetent person's life or provide comfort to the incompetent person." In other words, both laws permit an independent body to overrule even the wishes of families or guardians where there is deemed to be an insufficient quality of life. There is in this a hidden preference not only for efficacious but cost-efficient treatment. It's expensive to keep severely disabled people on life support for indefinite periods, and both laws are to some degree informed by notions of—surprise, surprise—hospital profitability and triage. Thus, even as Bush was fanning the wet ink on the bill to give Schiavo's parents standing to appeal in federal court, Texas hospitals were routinely yanking life support from those whom central casting too often depict not as "innocent" but as hangers-on, not only as incapacitated but as inconvenient, not as priceless but as greedy, resource-sucking welfare/Medicaid/Medicare profligates.

Terri Schiavo's poor body, suspended between ideologies, has become a metaphor for what will not live and cannot die. The tabloids recirculate the scripts endlessly—her will to live, her will to die, God's will, the living will. "Life" has become a convenient weapon in service to the unprincipled exercise of raw power—a corruption that will, one may confidently predict, take on a yet more fearsome life in years to come. Her death presages more arbitrary incursions into the realm of the judiciary, unsettling the balance of powers in profound ways. Due process doesn't mean one whit to the Republicans in this Congress. And the notion that any of us can now expect to have a right to privacy, or to choose the course of our medical treatment, or to quibble about that silly old canard we used to think of as reproductive freedom—well, let's just say we'd better get hyperreal. ■

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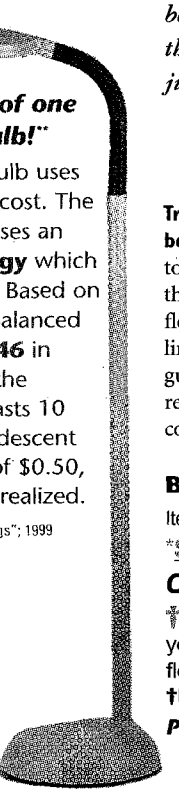

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ERIC ALTERMAN

In Re Rather: The Target Is Journalism

That the resignation of Dan Rather from his CBS News anchor job is a humiliation for the so-called liberal media (SCLM) is taken as a given across the conservative and mainstream press. An unsigned *Wall Street Journal* editorial crowed of "A Media Watershed," celebrating "the end of the liberal monopoly." In a piece headlined "It Is Watergate," *New York Post* pundit Eric Fettmann announced, "Those who have long been convinced of a liberal bias in journalism have found their smoking gun." But it's not merely right-wingers who've jumped on this bandwagon. *Newsweek* investigative reporter Michael Isikoff observed that "one consequence of the CBS debacle here is that it's going to take the sting out of the liberal charge that there's a conservative propaganda machine exemplified by Fox News." "Oh, absolutely," cooed an appreciative Bill O'Reilly in response.

Yet the premise that Rather is a liberal and is therefore representative of the dread disease of liberal bias rests entirely on complaints not about liberalism but about journalism. I don't know Rather well, but in the five or six times we've spoken at assorted journalism-related dinners over the years I've never heard him say anything particularly liberal. Before the case of the botched reporting on Bush's likely desertion of his National Guard duty—based on documents, by the way, that still have not been proved to be forgeries—the indictment against Rather rests largely on a few deliberate misreadings of historical events. Yes, Rather once spoke at a Democratic fundraiser, but he did so as a favor to his daughter, who never informed him of the partisan nature of the affair. Yes, more than thirty years ago, he found himself in a shouting match with Richard Nixon, but he was trying to get answers out of a man who was hiding a criminal conspiracy to undermine American democracy. The same is true of Rather's questioning of Vice President George H.W. Bush in 1988, which is often trotted out as Exhibit A in the liberal media conspiracy. In a piece titled "Dan Rather: The Anchor as Madman," *Slate*'s Bryan Curtis described Rather as having "harangued the vice president about the Iran-Contra scandal," and credited Bush's response with quelling the "wimp factor."

This is, to put it mildly, an odd perspective for a journalist to take. Like Nixon, Bush was seeking to gain the presidency by lying to the American people about his role in a burgeoning scandal involving criminal activity at the highest levels of government. During an interview that Bush himself insisted be carried live, Rather tried to zero in on the inconsistencies in Bush's story, only to be met with evasions and lies: "It's been looked at by the Tower Commission.... I find this to be a rehash.... Now this has all been looked into. It's just a rehash.... And I've answered every question put before me.... a rehash.... I've already explained that.... there's nothing new here.... there's nothing new on this."

Bush was right in his contention that his interview yielded "nothing new," but only because he continued to stonewall to protect his presidential hopes. Bush had attended at least three meetings where the diversion was discussed in great detail. In June 1992 Iran/*contra* special prosecutor Lawrence Walsh made public his discovery of Caspar Weinberger's 1,700 pages of notes, which demonstrated that Bush's "Sergeant Shultz" defense was nonsense. Former National Security Council staff member Howard Teicher told reporters in September 1992 that together with Oliver North, he had, in fact, fully briefed the Vice President on all activities relating to the Iranian initiative, blowing a hole in Bush's contention to the Tower investigation board that he had not learned of the events until briefed in December 1986 by Senate Intelligence Committee chair David Durenberger, a lie he repeated to Rather.

Bush partisans blamed Walsh's release of the incriminating Weinberger notes as the primary cause of Bush's loss of the election. *New York Times* reporter David Johnston noted four days after the election, "In the finger-pointing ambiance of the post-election White House, the Walsh-as-saboteur theory has already risen to the status of received wisdom.... Some Bush loyalists suggested that Mr. Walsh had finally achieved by negative publicity what he had failed to accomplish in the courts: driving a Reagan administration official from office over the affair." (Here again, the right-wingers blame the messenger, not the truth.)

Rather's staccato style of interviewing invites plenty of deserved derision, and he might have had a better command of the details of his story, but at least he took his charge seriously. *Columbia Journalism Review*'s Gloria Cooper noted at the time, "In this frustrating age in which presidential press conferences mock their intent, in which administration officials, political candidates, company representatives, and other so-called newsmakers come expertly trained in the art of avoiding touchy topics, and in which TV journalists approach their interviewees with the deference accorded a 'guest,' Rather's persistent refusal, in that now-famous interview, to let Vice President Bush direct the course of the discussion was a welcome departure from the norm."

Unarguably, Rather screwed up on the National Guard story, but former AP president Louis Boccardi and Reagan/Bush Attorney General Dick Thornburgh concluded in their official investigation that alleged liberal bias played no role. As James Goodale pointed out in the *New York Review of Books*, "Lost in the commotion over the authenticity of the documents is that the underlying facts of Rather's *60 Minutes* report are substantially true. Bush did not take the physical exam required of all pilots; his superiors gave him the benefit of any doubt; he did receive special treatment." As it turned out, thanks to a brilliant right-wing media onslaught, the net effect of the story was—as with his father—to give yet another deliberately deceptive politician named George Bush a pass, and to help lay the groundwork for his re-election.

Rather's successes and failures were those of a dogged and decidedly overzealous journalist, not an ideologically driven liberal. The right-wing attack on him is explicitly designed to confuse those two concepts. Defenders of the profession of all political stripes must insure that they not be allowed to succeed. ■

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ARTICLES

Hugo Chávez and Petro Populism

by CHRISTIAN PARENTI

The views from the slopes of Barrio San Agustín del Sur are spectacular. Tight passageways frame Caracas and the lush, cloud-draped Avila Mountain beyond. Along the neighborhood's rough cement steps, teenagers lounge around, flirting, arguing or lost in the cheap text-messaging functions of their cell phones. Ascending a nearby cliff is a small garbage dump. From afar its refuse looks like the sand in some ominous urban hourglass.

Illiteracy, violence, disease and the listlessness of endemic unemployment have shaped the life of this barrio since landless squatters from the countryside first settled it about forty years ago. But much of that could be changing.

"Even though we have had problems, we are moving forward," says Carmen Guerrero, a woman in her late 40s who is one of San Agustín's most dedicated activists. "Here, we are all with President Chávez. Everybody except for maybe six families."

On the yellow walls of her living room are masks in the form of fashionable ladies' faces, a clock, a mirror and a small picture of Venezuela's populist president, Hugo Chávez Frías. Guerrero explains that she and her neighbors are studying in several government-created programs called missions and organizing themselves into committees to deal with everything from local and national election campaigns to sanitation and legalization of land titles.

Like most slums in Caracas, this community also has a state-owned, subsidized market, a soup kitchen, a number of small-scale cooperative businesses and a little two-story, octagonal, red-brick medical center. Upstairs two Cuban doctors live in cramped quarters; downstairs is a small waiting room and clinic.

Guerrero's neighbor, a young man named Carlos Martinez, is showing me around; he works with the local construction cooperative. They have a contract from the mayor's office to lay new drainage pipe in the barrio. Given the recent flooding, it is an important task. Later he shows me where a patch of *ranchos*—dirt-floored shacks made of corrugated tin and wood—are being replaced at government expense by solid, two-story brick homes.

For this little barrio and a thousand others like it, such changes mean a lot. Like two generations of Venezuelan politicians before him, Chávez has pledged *sembrar el petróleo*—to sow the oil. That is, to invest its profits in a way that transforms the very structure of Venezuela's economy. But what would that entail? Are social programs enough?

Lately Chávez has been talking about a "revolution within the revolution," about "transcending capitalism" and about "building a socialism for the twenty-first century." It is a discourse that frightens his enemies, electrifies his base and inspires the left throughout Latin America. After two decades of the US-promoted Washington Consensus—a cocktail of radical privatization, open markets and severe fiscal austerity—Latin America is an economic disaster marked by increasing poverty and inequality.

Taken as a whole and controlling for inflation, Latin America has grown little since the mid-1980s and hardly at all in the past seven years. With the entire region primed for social change, a new breed of populists and social democrats is coming to power. Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay, in addition to Venezuela, have leftist governments of some sort, while Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru will hold presidential elections in 2006.

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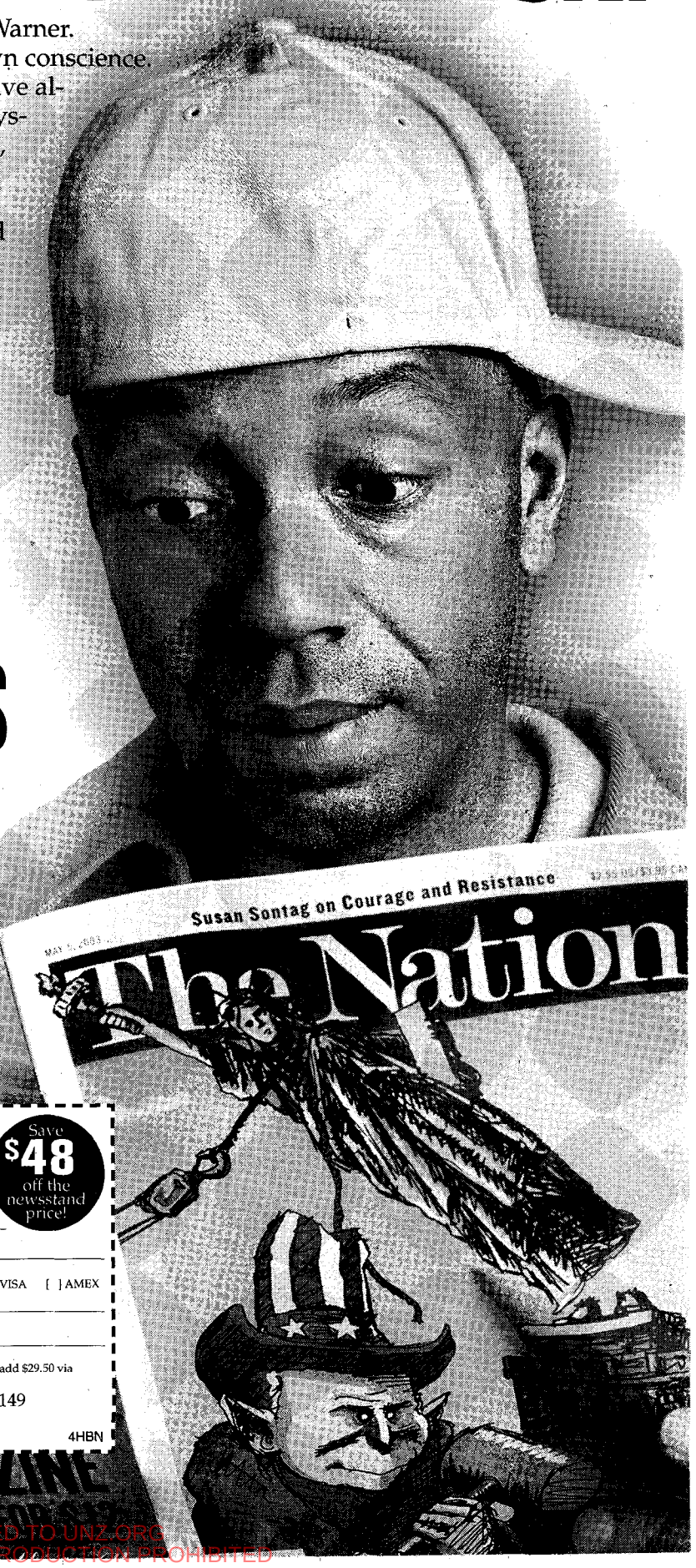

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But a closer look at Venezuela reveals just how vexing and complicated a political and economic turn to the left can be, even in a country that is rich with oil and not deeply indebted.

Thus far, Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution, named for South America's nineteenth-century liberator, Simón Bolívar, has deepened and politicized a pre-existing tradition of Venezuelan populism. Despite Chávez's often radical discourse, the government has not engaged in mass expropriations of private fortunes, even agricultural ones, nor plowed huge sums into new collectively owned forms of production. In fact, private property is protected in the new Constitution promulgated after Chávez came to power. What the government has done is spend billions on new social programs, $3.7 billion in the past year alone. As a result, 1.3 million people have learned to read, millions have received medical care and an estimated 35–40 percent of the population now shops at subsidized, government-owned supermarkets. Elementary school enrollment has increased by more than a million, as schools have started offering free food to students. The government has created several banks aimed at small businesses and cooperatives, redeployed part of the military to do public works and is building several new subway systems around the country. To boost agricultural production in a country that imports 80 percent of what it consumes, Chávez has created a land-reform program that rewards private farmers who increase productivity and punishes those who do not with the threat of confiscation.

For now, the Venezuelan battle against poverty is possible only because oil prices have been at record highs for several years.

The government has also structured many of its social programs in ways that force communities to organize. To gain title to barrio homes built on squatted land, people must band together as neighbors and form land committees. Likewise, many public works jobs require that people form cooperatives and then apply for a group contract. Cynics see these expanding networks of community organizations as nothing more than a clientelist electoral machine. Rank-and-file Chavistas call their movement "participatory democracy," and the revolution's intellectuals describe it as a long-term struggle against the cultural pathologies bred by all resource-rich economies—the famous "Dutch disease," in which the oil-rich state is expected to dole out services to a disorganized and unproductive population.

But for the moment, the Venezuelan battle against poverty is possible only because oil prices have been at record highs for several years, and the state owns most of the petroleum industry. All of Venezuela's oil and mining and most of its basic industry were nationalized in the mid-1970s. On average, oil sales make up 30 percent of Venezuelan GDP, provide half of state income and make up 80 percent of all Venezuelan exports.

Internal and often sympathetic critics of the reform process in Venezuela say it is one thing to "spend the oil" on social welfare; it is another altogether to "sow the oil" and create new collectively owned, productive, nonsubsidized industries that will generate wealth in an egalitarian and sustainable fashion.

"When the coup happened we realized we had to get involved or we would lose everything," explains Carmen Guerrero. She says she was always a Chávez supporter but was not very active until the April 2002 coup d'état against Chávez launched by Venezuela's main business council, its notoriously corrupt labor federation, dissident military officers and masses of middle- and upper-class Caraqueños. Declassified documents have since revealed that the CIA knew at least a week beforehand that a coup was planned, while other US government agencies, such as the National Endowment for Democracy, were channeling aid to the opposition.

"There is no going back now," says Guerrero. Then, very seriously, she adds: "I hugged Chávez at a rally. I don't know how I got through security. I guess because I am short. I can't explain the feeling, the emotion was so strong." She clutches her fists to her breast and looks away.

Guerrero started supporting Chávez in 1992, on that fateful day when the then-unknown 37-year-old colonel launched a failed coup of his own. When defeat appeared imminent, Chávez surrendered. To avoid a bloodbath he went on television and asked his compatriots who were still holding two cities to put down their weapons.

During that short live broadcast Chávez did two things that electrified the Venezuelan imagination. First, he took personal responsibility for the botched coup. This seemed to many viewers like a significant break from the standard political tradition of lying and blaming others for failure. Then, in explaining the defeat, Chávez said, "For now, the objectives that we have set for ourselves have not been achieved."

During the next two years, while Chávez was in prison studying, that key phrase—"for now," or *por ahora* in Spanish—became a rallying cry, a slogan of defiance painted on walls, a talisman of hope in an otherwise squalid and corrupt political landscape.

Guerrero's sentiments, down to the details about the coup and the *por ahora* speech, were echoed again and again in dozens of interviews throughout some of Caracas's poorest slums. The majority of people here—ranging from formerly apolitical housewives to hard-core veterans of the urban guerrilla movements of the 1970s—revere President Chávez. They view him as a political saint, a savior, the embodiment of a new national ideal.

But through Guerrero's open front door we can see the Modernist towers of offices, banks, hotels and luxury apartments in the other Caracas, a city that has grown fat on the vast oil fortunes flowing from Venezuela's subsoil.

It is this contrast between rich and poor—a contrast so visually obvious as to make the landscape of Caracas feel almost didactic—that animates Venezuelan politics. And in the other Caracas, the one with the country clubs, the citizens hate Chávez with an ardor as strong as the devotion one finds for him in the barrios. Just as the urban poor and campesinos love Chávez because of his swarthy, indigenous looks, tight curly hair and his rough,

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down-to-earth talk, so too are the wealthier classes driven apoplectic with rage by the fact that their president looks like a construction worker or cab driver.

For six years Chávez and his supporters have battled this opposition, an enemy that Chávez has nicknamed *los escuálidos*, or "the weaklings." But the opposition has not always been so weak. It includes the privately owned mass media, which have been virulently and propagandistically hostile to the government, devoting days at a time to commercial-free attacks on it as "totalitarian" and "Castro communist." There was the armed coup, then the oil strike, which cost the economy an estimated $7.5 billion and led to severe shortages of gas, food and beer. As one consultant in the Planning Ministry said in all seriousness: "I thought the day we ran out of beer would be the day the country fell into anarchy and civil war."

There was also a prolonged public protest by a group of respected former generals who urged active soldiers to rebel. Then there was a series of violent protests by rightist street fighters calling themselves the Guarimbas, who set up burning barricades during early 2004.

The barrio 23 de Enero is to the Venezuelan left what Compton is to hip-hop: the home of its hard core.

Despite all this, Chávez and his political allies have won seven national ballots, including the approval of a new Constitution, an overhaul of the notoriously corrupt judiciary, two national legislative elections, two presidential elections and one attempted presidential recall.

Through it all, occasional armed clashes between hard-core Chavistas and opposition militants have left about twenty people on both sides dead or seriously wounded. And the Chávez government has enacted a media law that punishes slander with jail time and prohibits broadcast of the twenty-four-hour-a-day video loops that were an opposition favorite, drawing sharp criticism from press-freedom advocates. But there has been no major government campaign of repression, not even against the architects of the coup, many of whom are at liberty and still in Venezuela.

The barrio 23 de Enero (January 23) is to the Venezuelan left what Compton is to hip-hop: the home of its hard core. The barrio's eponym is the date of a popular uprising that took place in 1958 against dictator Marcos Pérez Jiménez. Tucked into a Caracas valley and flowing over a few hillsides, 23 de Enero is a mix of 1950s-era cement tower blocks and the usual cinder-block homes wedged along winding staircases and walkways.

The ten- and fifteen-story tower blocks are adorned in an improbable and tatterdemalion layer of colorful laundry hanging from external drying racks or barred windows. Behind the clothes and the bars one can see lush potted plants, caged and squawking birds or household items stacked up in the tiny, overcrowded apartments. On the back sides of the towers, mounds of trash sit in and around dumpsters that are placed below long, dilapidated external garbage chutes that usually have big sections of pipe missing.

From the top of each tower flies a red-and-blue flag: the colors of the Coordinador Simón Bolívar, a powerful community organization that has its roots in the urban guerrilla movements of the 1970s and '80s. Described with the catchphrase Tupamaros, these urban partisans were really a collection of groups and factions rather than a single force, as the name would suggest.

Even today, many comrades in the barrios are still armed. A fellow journalist was pulled over by masked gunmen at a Tupamaro checkpoint in 23 de Enero during the tense days around the August 2004 referendum. The homies were making sure no *escuálido* thugs snuck into the 'hood to do a drive-by. They also wanted my friend to donate his videocamera to the revolution, putting a gun to his head to help him make his decision. But when adult supervision finally showed up, the *muchachos* running the traffic stop were persuaded to give back the camera.

At the Coordinador's little headquarters I meet this other type of Chavista: not a sentimental housewife like Guerrero, but a hard-core ex-guerrilla. Juan Contreras is balding, a bit paunchy and has rather unassuming boyish features, but he got his political education the hard way and at a young age: in the form of demonstrations, police beatings and shootouts with the paramilitary forces of the state. He is now one of the key organizers in the Coordinador.

The walls outside the office are covered in revolutionary murals: One honors a youth killed in a demonstration against Henry Kissinger in the 1970s, another is for the Zapatistas, a third displays the classic Alberto Korda portrait of Che Guevara. Most of the art predates Chávez, and none portrays his image.

"Chávez did not produce the movements—we produced him," explains Contreras. "He has helped us tremendously, but what is going on here cannot be ascribed only to Chávez."

According to Contreras and a few of his comrades, the Coordinador got its start after the failed Chávez coup in 1992. In the wake of that defeat, the government began jailing leftists. Contreras fled to Cuba for a month with twenty-nine other activists from 23 de Enero; upon their return, almost all of them were arrested, and Contreras went into hiding. About a year and a half after the attempted coup, the activists regrouped and decided that armed struggle was definitely over and done with. They created the Coordinador and devoted themselves to aboveground work.

Today the Coordinador pursues a three-pronged strategy that involves reclaiming public space from drug gangs, recovering local cultural traditions and promoting organized sports. Already the barrio has produced several players for Major League Baseball, including Ugueth Urbina, Juan Carlos Ovalles and Juan Carlos Pulido. Later a young guy named Kristhian Linares stops by to pay his respects to Contreras. Only 18 years old, Linares has just signed with the Florida Marlins. He starts spring training as soon as his papers are in order.

After building these forms of social solidarity, the Coordinador then launched another project, setting up committees to deal with health, land titles, elections and the like. Some of this work interfaces with government-funded missions, some doesn't. But the paramount issue here is security. The slums of Caracas are extremely violent. Every week, around eighty people are murdered in this city of 5 million.

"We use culture and sports and organization to take over public spaces," explains Contreras. What if the drug gangs refuse to

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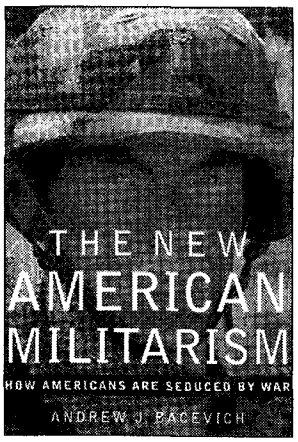

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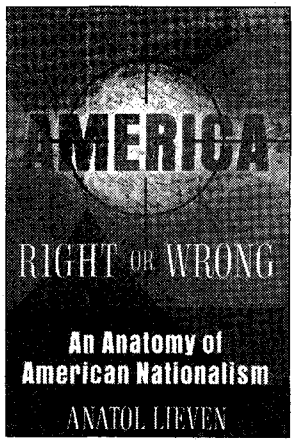

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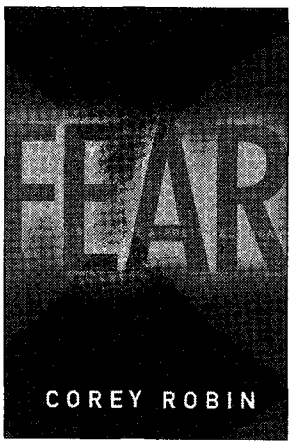

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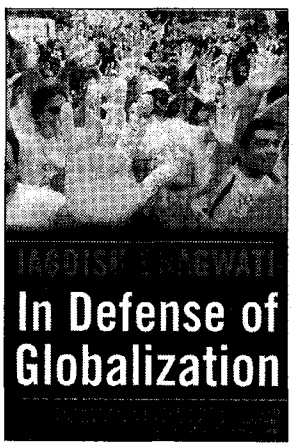

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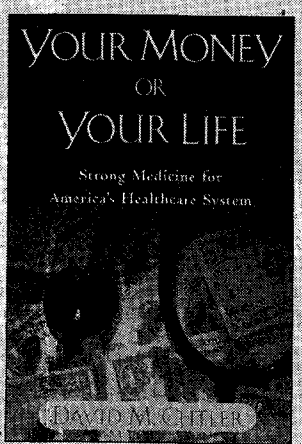

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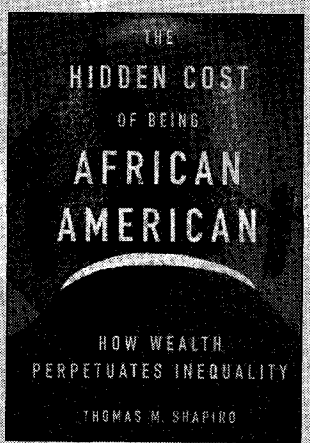

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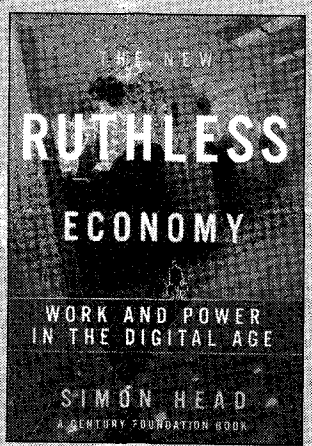

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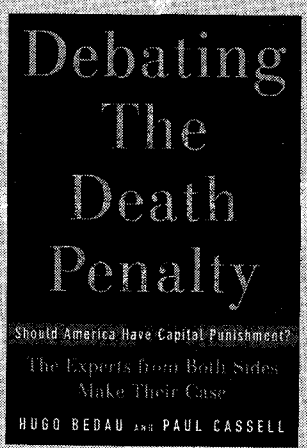

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move? "Well, many of them are connected by family to the larger community, so we use that pressure. There is the armed tradition here, and they respect that. And there is a tradition of lynching in this barrio. In the past the community has killed some criminals. Not recently, but it has happened. So most of the gangs take us seriously and stay away from the central areas."

Later, as we scale a ridge packed with little homes, he explains that farther into the barrio are some agricultural projects but that I'll have to come back to visit them because the outlying areas become dangerous in the afternoon. Clearly, cultural reclamation plus threat of lynching does not completely displace crime.

It also seems that the opposition, or elements in it, have on occasion used criminals against Chavistas. An activist from nearby 23 de Enero, a woman who once lived in California, tells the story of a gangster who was paid to make death threats against the local Cuban doctors. The doctors got so freaked out they split. But the woman, a trained social worker, found the young thug, a local guy, and explained to him that he would certainly be tracked down and killed by angry Chavistas if he persisted with his threats. The gangster reconsidered and decided to stay out of politics. The Cuban doctors returned.

'This government is totally incompetent. They have no idea what they are doing.'
—banker Oscar Garcia Mendoza

The organized opposition to Chávez is rather thin on the ground these days, having been largely discredited by the right-wing extremism of their coup and the economic devastation caused by their oil strike. So I visit the offices of the right-wing tabloid *Así Es la Noticia*, owned by one of Venezuela's top-circulation dailies, *El Nacional*.

"Look, Chávez won the referendum. People have to accept that," says the editor, Albor Rodriguez. She is in her early 30s, an *escuálido* all the way, but she respects the facts.

Standing erect at her desk, one black-clad shoulder tipped forward, she takes long drags on her cigarette between comments. "There is no 'Castro communist' here. That's ridiculous. They say there are Cubans in the government and the security. But there is no proof. However, does Chávez have autocratic tendencies? Yes! He comes from the military. Does his government, or he himself, know what they are doing? No! His head is a mix—a marmalade of notions and slogans. He speaks without thinking. He makes innuendoes about Condoleezza Rice being in love with him. That's insane. He's totally erratic."

Albor, to my surprise, is almost as harsh on the opposition: "They lost because Chávez has a deep emotional connection with the people, and they have no connection with the people. Also, he has spent a lot of money on the barrios. He pours money into the barrios."

She explains that when her paper reported on the real work of the missions, some readers accused her of lying and "having gone to the moon to find these things." She explains: "The opposition lied to itself. They were deluded and now they are smashed." With that rather definitive summation, she puts out her cigarette and invites me to lunch.

There are some in the opposition whose critique focuses less on Chávez's supposed abuses of power and more on the government's alleged mismanagement and left-wing economic tomfoolery. Oscar Garcia Mendoza is president of Banco Venezolano de Credito, a very old and conservative bank. He's what Chávez would call an "oligarch," the official enemy: a capitalist financier. But when I meet him in his beautiful corner office on the ninth floor of a Modernist highrise, he is beaming. He wears a dark blue suit, his gray hair is cropped stylishly short and he has that healthy look that seems to come from being rich and relaxed.

Classical music filters out from speakers in the ceiling; on the table are fine Cuban cigars. We sit in bent plywood and leather Herman Miller chairs, and gaze out across the city through a glass wall lined with thick green plants.

"Business has never been better," says Garcia. "This government is totally incompetent. They have no idea what they are doing. The head of their land reform, Eliezer Otaiza, is a former male stripper. And did you see they just appointed Carlos Lanz, a former terrorist kidnapper, a communist, as head of Alcasa, our largest aluminum company?" Through it all, Garcia wears a slightly suppressed grin as if he thinks the whole thing is hilarious. "I mean, can you imagine that?"

In a way, Lanz's appointment is not so outrageous: Another former guerrilla, Ali Rodriguez Araque, once minister of mining and energy, then head of OPEC, is now foreign minister and widely respected as a level-headed negotiator.

Garcia also has some very concrete criticisms. He says that the current economic boom is a chimera based on oil prices. In 2004 government spending jumped 47 percent, much of which went to pay for healthcare and education—the missions. But despite the oil windfall, the government has had to borrow heavily. Instead of turning to international financiers, it has increased its internal debt to Venezuelan banks.

Garcia says that in the past four years this internal debt has gone from $2 billion to more than $27 billion. The Finance Ministry confirms these figures and says that 60 percent of this debt is held in government bonds.

"But what makes this really crazy," says Garcia, "is that the government is depositing all its oil revenue in the same banks at about 5 percent, then borrowing it back at 14 percent. It's a very easy way for bankers to make money. That's why I say this is a government for the rich."

Last year Venezuelan banks made $1.38 billion in profits, just a bit more than they did the year before. And most of that money came from lending to the Chávez government and trading in special government-approved, dollar-denominated bonds, a legal loophole in the new currency-control law. Garcia's bank actually does no business with the government, but the huge increase in oil revenues has doubled his loan portfolio. The economy is awash in money: Growth was 17.3 percent in 2004.

So if the economy is booming, why does Garcia dislike Chávez?

"These people are crooks," he says. "Look, Venezuela has always been corrupt, but these guys are the worst." When I point out that the government just fired 120 managers in Zulia state for corruption, Garcia waves it away as insufficient.

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"What are they doing with all the money? They are not investing. They spend it all on food and medicine. As soon as oil goes down, their party is over." So what should the government do to avoid this? "They should privatize everything."

Getting a Chávez government response to charges of mismanagement, corruption and overdependence on freakishly high oil prices is difficult. My inquiries are fed into the labyrinthine bureaucracy of the Information Ministry, where every few days a new official loses my paperwork and needs a full CV and another letter from my editors and another complete written explanation of my project.

After three weeks no one in the Chávez government has come forth with an on-the-record statement except for one laid-back spokesperson at the Higher Education Ministry.

Finally an old friend gets me an interview with his boss, Jorge Giordani, a former academic who befriended Chávez during the rebellious paratrooper's stint in jail and is now the planning and development minister. On matters of economic development, Giordani is the revolution's brain. We meet in his office near the top of South America's tallest building, one of a pair of towers, the other of which stands half-burned, its gold-tinted, mirrored windows blown out and black, the result of a recent accident caused by bad maintenance.

Giordani is tall, gray and hunched. He wears big glasses, a tie, a brown cardigan sweater and has a short white Abe Lincoln beard. He evades most specific questions. As for corruption, he says simply: "We are not doing enough. It is a very serious problem."

Mostly he offers a long but interesting explanation of Venezuela's historical development and its lack of internal economic integration. We move from map to map as he explicates the economic geography of various regions.

Many Chavistas hope that investing in physical infrastructure, health and education will open new, nonpetroleum industries in high technology, business services, healthcare and agriculture. When I ask Giordani how the country plans to wean itself from oil, about land reform and about the many so-called "endogenous" development projects being promoted, he sighs and shakes his head as if I am naïve.

"We've been fighting political battles for most of our time in office. Many people have learned to read in the last few years, but how long will it take for them to work in high technology, or medicine, or services? Ten years? A generation? We are fighting a very individualistic, *rentier* culture. Everything has been 'Mama state, Papa state, give me oil money.' To organize people is extremely hard."

After a long, roundabout discussion in which I press him on the question of import substitution and new industrialization, he settles on one key point: Venezuela's only real hope lies in regional economic integration. Only then will internal markets be big enough to nurture alternative technologies and new industries that might otherwise threaten current multinational monopolies.

Giordani seems weary and cynical. "No, I am just practical," he says with a chuckle. "Development in Venezuela will take at least fifty years."

And how long will the oil last?

"Maybe twenty years, maybe thirty." ■

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MEET JESSE LEE PETERSON, WHO SAYS WHAT THE RIGHT WOULD LIKE TO, BUT CAN'T.

The Minister of Minstrelsy

MAX BLUMENTHAL

In late February, inside a sterile conference hall at Washington's premier conservative think tank, the Heritage Foundation, a crowd of no more than seventy took off their snow-flecked coats and settled in for an afternoon with a group of speakers billed as "The New Black Vanguard." Perched on a platform above the audience, the speakers promptly launched a barrage of attacks on the civil rights establishment and "the entertainment-industrial complex." At first the audience seemed disengaged, even a bit overwhelmed by the cacophony of blustery rhetoric. Then the Rev. Jesse Lee Peterson piped up. "W.E.B. Du Bois was a communist, socialist pig," Peterson crowed. A few of his fellow panelists blanched at his overheated language. But once the shock subsided, laughter rippled through the previously mute crowd, followed by vigorous applause.

It was vintage Peterson. Throughout his fifteen-year career as a right-wing evangelical minister, Peterson has never shied from bombastic assaults on targets ranging from civil rights leaders to liberal Democrats to undocumented immigrants. But while Peterson's strident style may be unique, with his extremist politics he is merely playing the role of front man for a murky, well-funded network of white nationalist activists and right-wing Beltway operatives. By deploying Peterson to gatherings like the Heritage event and into the media, this coterie of conservatives have been able to apply a bold veneer of blackness over the brand of bigotry they find increasingly inconvenient to espouse on their own. Peterson has no professional or political accomplishments to speak of, beyond directing a small inner-city aid ministry and hosting a radio show syndicated on a handful of AM stations across the country. To his sponsors, though, that's irrelevant; it is his immunity from charges of racism that matters.

A former welfare recipient and follower of Louis Farrakhan and Jesse Jackson, Peterson says he experienced a political awakening fifteen years ago, when he simultaneously discovered Jesus and Ronald Reagan. "I was born a Democrat but I had no values; it was anything goes, whatever you want to do, and that came from the black leadership," Peterson told me. "But I finally started to examine it for myself and I realized the Democratic platform was an anti-God, anti-values, anti-American platform."

It was then that Peterson formed BOND, or Brotherhood Organization of a New Destiny, a faith-based nonprofit he now runs out of a ramshackle storefront in mid-city Los Angeles. Through BOND's counseling service and its boys' home, Peterson says, he teaches inner-city youth "that they're Americans, not African-Americans, and that they should start giving back to their country instead of complaining." But with a tiny staff and an annual budget just above $200,000—more than one-fourth of which it spent on rent in 2001, according to Guidestar.org, a group that tracks nonprofits—it's unclear how BOND could bring more than a handful of boyz in the hood to heel.

BOND's primary function seems to be to serve as a platform for Peterson's various publicity stunts. His flagship media event was "National Repudiation of Jesse Jackson Day," timed to coincide with Martin Luther King Jr. Day. If you're wondering why you never heard of this grassroots black backlash against America's most well-known living civil rights leader, you might not be as out of touch as you think: In its five-year life span (it was discontinued last year), Jesse Jackson's "repudiation" was not national (it was limited to a street corner outside Jackson's LA office), and it consisted almost exclusively of Peterson's friends, BOND employees, boys' home residents and small-fry demagogues like anti-immigrant border vigilante Glenn Spencer, who joined the crowd in 2004. Despite a lack of public interest, Peterson claimed to have gotten under Jackson's skin. On Sean Hannity's radio show in 2001, Peterson stated, "Sean, if anything happens to me I want you to make sure you turn this tape over to the authorities and have them look into Jesse Jackson's organization or anybody that's connected with him." (Only recently did Hannity admit that he "probably should have" disclosed his membership on BOND's board.) The day after Peterson's outburst, a NewsMax.com headline announced, "Civil Rights Leader Fears for Life After Jesse Jackson Confrontation." Peterson insists his campaign was successful, boasting in a recent Washington appearance that he "soundly repudiated" Jackson before moving on to his new targets: the NAACP and the Congressional Black Caucus.

Though Peterson's stunts border on self-satire, there is a method to his madness. In his hunt for recognition, Peterson has modeled himself after his hero, Booker T. Washington, the turn-of-the-century author and entrepreneur dubbed "the Great Accommodator." Like Washington, who allied himself with conservative whites in a quest for corporate grants for his cash-strapped Tuskegee Institute, Peterson demonstrates loyalty to the most rigid elements of the white establishment in ways that seem calculated to advance his personal ventures and increase his public stature.

"Blacks see racism everywhere they look, even though by most accounts there is really very little racism left among whites—certainly not among those with much power and influence. The sad truth is that black racism is far more pervasive today than is white racism," Peterson wrote in his 2003 polemic *Scam: How the Black Leadership Exploits Black America*. For conservative Republicans frustrated with the steadfast refusal of minorities to

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abandon their grievances, Peterson's words are a source of comfort. For white nationalists determined to intimidate and marginalize aspirant ethnic minorities, Peterson could embolden their crusade. It's no wonder both factions have promoted him so aggressively.

The first time I became aware of Peterson was when I slipped into a February 2003 gathering of the California Coalition for Immigration Reform (CCIR), a local anti-immigrant organization designated a "hate group" by the Southern Poverty Law Center. Once the evening began, Peterson was introduced to the crowd by CCIR's director, Barbara Coe, a grandmotherly figure who might pass for a librarian were it not for her penchant for foaming-at-the-mouth references to Mexican immigrants as "savages." With an oversized sweater hanging from his portly frame, Peterson waved and flashed a forced grin as the crowd applauded politely. Later, Arizona border militia leader Chris Simcox stepped to the stage to spin ominous tales of Mexican immigrants spreading tuberculosis in America's public schools and Red Chinese troops spreading out across the US-Mexico border, poised for invasion.

I was reminded of Peterson during an interview I conducted this past September with Virginia Abernethy, a self-avowed "racial separationist" and editor of the journal of the Council of Conservative Citizens, a white supremacist organization that evolved from the white Citizens' Councils formed in the 1950s South to fight integration. In an apparent effort to counter the commonly held notion that she is a racist, Abernethy informed me that she is friends with "a black minister in Los Angeles named Jesse Lee Peterson."

When I asked Peterson for his own views on immigrants, he explained, "There are illegals coming into this country, and they're bringing crime and drugs, all kinds of stuff. So there is a savage personality to what they're doing."

According to Heidi Beirich of the Southern Poverty Law Center, Peterson's views on immigrants reflect his enlistment by a web of think tanks and foundations campaigning to make anti-immigrant politics mainstream. In February 2002, Beirich says, Peterson was invited by the anti-immigrant organization Numbers USA to a lobbying session with Republican Congressman Tom Tancredo of Colorado in Washington's Cannon House Office Building. There, Peterson and twenty-six other right-wing activists were told by Numbers USA director Roy Beck that for their campaign to succeed, it "needs to look like a grassroots effort."

Immigrant-basher is only one of the many hats Peterson wears. And thus, "illegals" aren't the only savages he sees wreaking havoc across America. "What else can you call black-on-black crime? Anytime you kill an innocent child, it is savagery," he told me. During a February 26 appearance on C-SPAN's *Washington Journal*, he was only slightly less vitriolic: "Most black men are very weak and insecure." (The unmarried Peterson's views on black women are bluntly summarized by the title of *Scam*'s thirteenth chapter, "Why Black Women Are So Mean.")

Rhetoric like this may not win any black Democrats over to the GOP, but it serves an important purpose for the right. "Jesse Lee Peterson gives the racists in the Republican Party deniability. He let's them say, 'What I'm saying can't be racism because black

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people are saying it,'" George Curry, editor in chief of the National Newspaper Publishers Association News Service and the *Chicago Tribune*'s former New York bureau chief, told me.

Curry, who has been a guest on Peterson's radio show, likens Peterson to Armstrong Williams, the disgraced black conservative radio host who admitted to having accepted taxpayer-funded bribes from the White House to promote its policies. "The bottom line with people like Peterson and Armstrong Williams is, if these people were not conservative, nobody would have ever heard of them," Curry said. "They're undistinguished, so they go to the short line, where there's plenty of payoff."

Indeed, though Peterson has no constituency to speak of, Washington's conservative elite have rolled out a welcome mat for him. He has become a fixture at the Conservative Political Action Conference, an annual gathering of conservative influentials often referred to as "the unofficial Republican convention." According to People for the American Way, during the 2002 conference Peterson used his speaking slot to declare the civil rights movement "the worst thing that could have happened to the black community." This year, when Peterson returned, he was given the honor of introducing Zell Miller, who presented the "Courage Under Fire Award" to the anti–John Kerry front Swift Boat Veterans for Truth.

Although Peterson has no constituency to speak of, Washington's conservative elite have rolled out a welcome mat for him.

Just a week later Peterson was down the street, moderating the Heritage event, which was titled "Responding to the Call: The New Black Vanguard Conference." Heritage is bankrolled largely by reclusive oil baron Richard Mellon Scaife and the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, a group that made hefty grants in the early 1990s for studies intended to prove the genetic inferiority of blacks and other ethnic minorities. Besides Peterson, the few who actually responded to Heritage's call included Roy Innis, a longtime supporter of Holocaust-denier Lyndon LaRouche and an apologist for the genocidal African dictator Idi Amin; and Gloria Jackson, whose sole distinction is being Booker T. Washington's great-granddaughter. "I think the best times for black people were during those periods of darkness," Jackson said, harking back fondly to the pre–civil rights era.

Given their apparent nostalgia for the Jim Crow South, the "New Vanguard" of black conservatives represents a novel trend in American politics. There have always been black Republicans, but never before have they been able to reach an anti–civil rights consensus. Richard Nixon's Assistant Secretary of Labor, Art Fletcher, and William Coleman, who was Secretary of Transportation for Gerald Ford, ascended through party ranks despite, and possibly because of, their vocal support for civil rights. Yet by 1996, when delegates at the Republican National Convention heckled Colin Powell for praising affirmative action, it was clear the GOP's internal dynamics had changed.

"The Republican Party has chased out its moderate voices, both black and white, and now they're captive to the far right wing," explained Curry. "So today the litmus test [for black conservatives] is, you must be against affirmative action or the Republicans will have no use for you."

At the heart of the effort to cultivate an extremist incarnation of black Republicanism is the National Center for Public Policy Research, a think tank that, like Heritage, is funded in large part by Bradley and Scaife. Founded in the early 1980s to provide PR for the Reagan Administration's policy supporting Central American death squads, NCPPR shifted its focus to domestic politics during an explosion of racial tumult in post–cold war America.

In 1992, while race rioting engulfed Los Angeles in the wake of the Rodney King beating, civil rights leaders and black Democratic politicians took to the airwaves to criticize the draconian policies of the Los Angeles police department as the riot's root cause. In the absence of a coordinated right-wing response, NCPPR enlisted a coterie of black conservatives, including Peterson, to denounce the rioters as wanton criminals while hailing the LAPD's ham-handed response. Out of the campaign grew Project 21, a group providing cable news programs with a reliable stable of black talking heads willing and able to say what white conservatives can't.

More than a decade after its formation, however, Project 21 is still hamstrung by its dearth of publicly recognized members. Besides the group's most well-known spokesman, Peterson, Project 21's roster includes the eminent Murdock Gibbs, described in his bio as a "Dallas-based entertainer, speaker and freelance writer." Then there's Kevin Martin, whose career as "an environmental contractor in Maryland" must have made his transition to punditry a no-brainer. (Martin showcased his political sophistication during a July 13, 2004, appearance on the Fox News Channel's *Hannity & Colmes* in which he compared the NAACP to the Ku Klux Klan.) And finally, Project 21 boasts the seasoned insider Eddie Huff, an insurance agent from Tulsa, Oklahoma.

NCPPR's executive director, David Almasi, coordinates Project 21's strategy, churns out its press releases and even provides its spokespeople with talking points before they appear on air. But as Project 21's only white associate, he tries to keep behind the curtain while his cadres bash everyone from black basketball players to civil rights veterans. Almasi's cover was blown in July 2004, when he decided to fill in for a Project 21 spokesman who had gotten a flat tire on his way to an appearance on C-SPAN. As Joshua Holland reported in the Internet magazine *The Gadflyer*, while introducing Almasi, the show's bemused host turned to him and stuttered, "Um…Project 21…a program for conservative African Americans…you're not African American."

"I'm an employee of Project 21, my bosses are the members of Project 21, the volunteers.… I take my marching orders from them, not from anybody else," Almasi blurted.

Despite Almasi's bungle, Project 21 remains a crucial gear in the right's propaganda factory. Most recently, the group dutifully attempted to stifle Democratic opposition to Condoleezza Rice's nomination as Secretary of State. On November 19, two days after Rush Limbaugh went on air to condemn a series of political cartoons mocking Rice, including a *Doonesbury* strip depicting Bush calling her "brown sugar," Almasi sent out a press release blaring, "President Bush's nomination of Condoleezza Rice as secretary of state has resulted in harsh liberal criticism

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that members of the black leadership network Project 21 consider racist."

Like clockwork, the right cranked up its Mighty Wurlitzer. While Peterson took to *Hannity & Colmes* to blast Democratic critics of Rice like Barbara Boxer and John Kerry as sworn "enemies to black people," Talon News's now-infamous former White House correspondent, Jeff Gannon, lifted a quote verbatim from Almasi's press release: "The recent racist attacks and mimicry of Condoleezza Rice are infuriating and despicable." Meanwhile, Project 21 member LaShawn Barber distilled news of the mock controversy on her blog, LaShawn Barber's Corner. With Rice under fire from Democrats for hyping bogus intelligence to build the case for invading Iraq, Project 21 managed to shift the discussion from the content of her character to the color of her skin.

Without well-heeled Republican operatives like Almasi behind them, Peterson and the rest of Project 21's cadres would probably be at home screaming at the TV. But instead, they're on TV, screaming at civil rights leaders who have spent their lifetimes representing millions of constituents. As Stephen Carter wrote in his 1991 memoir *Reflections of an Affirmative Action Baby*, "When the black folks get out of hand...many white folks think that it is nice to have another black person to shut them down." ■

Letter From Kosovo
by Misha Glenny

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BACKSLIDING IN THE BALKANS

Ramush Haradinaj, who resigned as Kosovo's prime minister on March 8, had been expecting his indictment for alleged war crimes for almost three months. American and European diplomats spent much of that time coaxing him to surrender voluntarily when the announcement was made. "He started to wobble a bit a couple of weeks before it was made public, but obviously we got over it," one of them told me in Belgrade.

International representatives put so much effort into persuading Haradinaj to go quietly because they were terrified that Kosovar Albanians might react by going on a rampage as they did in March 2004, almost bringing UNMIK, the United Nations administration that runs the province, to its knees. And boy, did the diplomats let their relief show. "Thanks to Ramush Haradinaj's dynamic leadership, strong commitment and vision," gushed Soren Jessen-Petersen, the head of UNMIK, "Kosovo is today closer than ever before to achieving its aspirations in settling its future status. Personally, I am saddened to no longer be working with a close partner and friend." There was some concern in European capitals that Jessen-Petersen had gone over the top. "After all," said a diplomat in Belgrade, "let's not forget that Haradinaj has been indicted for committing the foulest of crimes."

Yet Jessen-Petersen's passionate outburst is understandable. International control over Kosovo is fragile. KFOR, the NATO-led force of 18,000 peacekeepers, is designed to prevent an unauthorized return of the Serbian military into the province; as it proved last March, it has no capacity to pacify tens of thousands of testosterone-driven young Albanians who are fed up with being unemployed and having no political control over their lives.

I have spent the past six years watching glumly as the Balkans slide back toward catastrophe as if in slow motion. Only a small minority of the actors involved want this outcome; many are breaking their backs to stop it from happening. But despite their efforts, three factors are driving the region toward, at best, damaging civil unrest and, at worst, a revival of armed conflict: a steady, severe economic crisis; the persistence of weak states caught up in an unholy constitutional tangle; and profound incompetence on the part of the international community.

Until the mess actually collapses into violence, there are real opportunities to halt the slide. But the countdown to disaster has already begun, and the region urgently requires the kind of political adroitness and élan that have been conspicuously absent over the past five years. The Balkans provide the clearest proof that Western military intervention, whether liberal or illiberal, is a complete waste of time, money and life if it is not accompanied by a coherent, long-term attempt to address the root causes of instability after hostilities have ceased. But as Western Europe and the United States are learning, it's easy to defeat small countries with limited military strength, and mind-bogglingly hard to create a working system of governance from the ashes of victory.

NATO supposedly dealt with the southern Serbian province of Kosovo in 1999 by going to war against Yugoslavia. (For those who have missed the past few episodes, what's left of that country has been refashioned as Serbia and Montenegro, although nobody believes this latest incarnation will last for very long.) In the past five years Kosovo has become unrecognizable, but in a very recognizable way. Its crumbling roads, heaving under the weight of civilian and international military vehicles, are punctuated every half-mile by gas stations trading under different, perhaps unique, emblems: Kospetrol, Kosova Petrol, Djukagjini Inc., International Gas and Petrol, ShqipGas, etc. Shell, BP, ExxonMobil and Lukoil (the Russian company ubiquitous elsewhere in the Balkans) are absent—a blow, perhaps, against the multinational giants and in favor of the small trader. Er, not quite.

Peppered between the gas stations are hotels, motels and restaurants offering countless beds to phantom tourists and kebabs, delicious cheese *burek* and Ohrid trout to ghostly foodies. Except for a few chic eateries in the main urban areas, these establishments are not going concerns but the long-term investment boltholes of corrupt politicians and organized criminal syndicates

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who have mountains of cash but nothing to do with it. The opprobrium that used to be hurled at Balkan people because of their apparent predilection for killing their neighbors is now drawn by their apparent tolerance for, and widespread indulgence in, organized criminal activities—drug dealing, trafficking of women and cigarette smuggling, to name but a few of the most popular. The Kosovars are seen as key movers in all these industries.

Before we condemn, let us consider the economic environment developed for the people of Kosovo by the combined might of the UN, the European Union and KFOR. (The people of Kosovo, whether Serb or Albanian, have no control of economic policy.) Two statistics stand out. First, Kosovo is the only territory in Europe that has recorded a negative growth rate each year since 2002. (Its sole competitor is the unrecognized breakaway republic of Transdniestria in Moldova, whose decline can be attributed to the emigration of about half its population in the past decade.) Second, overall unemployment stands at 50 percent, while youth unemployment runs at 70 percent. Every year 30,000–40,000 young Kosovars enter a nonexistent job market. Yet Kosovo is almost completely surrounded, both economically and culturally, by the affluence of the EU. If a young Kosovar, struggling to raise children and look after elderly parents, is offered $700 (well over twice a ministerial salary in Kosovo's provisional government) to lead a donkey packed with cigarettes over the border to Montenegro, will he hesitate because of the moral implications of the act?

This decline, and the dysfunctional mafia economy it has precipitated, is largely the consequence of an utterly botched privatization strategy executed by the EU via the inefficient and corrupt Kosovo Trust Agency, which is staffed and run by Western civil servants. Under UN Security Council Resolution 1244, which details the limbo in which Kosovo must live, most political decisions at all levels of government are reserved for the UN's Special Representative in Pristina and his bureaucracy, while the powers of the provisional government and the municipalities are carefully restricted.

Stirred into this paralyzing brew are the Serbs' and Albanians' antithetical aspirations for the province, and the grim conditions in which the Serb minority in Kosovo lives. Resolution 1244 stipulates that the province is part of Serbia under the temporary aegis of the UN, until such time as all parties happily work out Kosovo's long-term constitutional future. For the Albanians, who currently make up some 90 percent of the population, independence is the only acceptable solution. (Albanian nationalists who seek union with the motherland are not to be underestimated, but they form a minority in Kosovo's political spectrum; Albanians from Albania openly oppose the idea. The international community is adamant that an independent Kosovo would not be permitted to form a political union with either Albania or the Albanian-dominated parts of Macedonia.) Most of Serbia's political spectrum concedes the possibility of advanced autonomy for Kosovo, whereby ultimate sovereignty (including foreign and defense policy) would rest in Belgrade. They would also demand self-governance for Serb-populated zones in the province.

Although in public the chancelleries of Europe and America insist that the so-called "final status" of Kosovo must wait until the Kosovars have achieved acceptable political standards (code for decent treatment of the Serb minority), in private all now more or less agree that Kosovo must become independent. Even Russia, Serbia's supposed staunch ally, shows no real interest in blocking Kosovo's statehood beyond rhetorical bluster. Some quarters even advocate independence regardless of the views of Kosovo's Serbs or Serbia. Crudely paraphrased, the most recent report of the International Crisis Group, an influential Brussels-based think tank, calls for independence for Kosovo with Serbia's approval, but if the Serbs don't like it, screw them.

Attractive though this solution may seem to some people, it will not work. Serbia is the key regional power and the main transit route for goods from the region to the rest of Europe, and for goods from northern Europe to the Middle East. If Kosovo becomes independent without Serbian approval, the prospects for a stable Bosnia, Montenegro and Macedonia are slim, as Serbian influence in these countries is almost certain to turn malign. Furthermore, the 100,000 Serbs still in the province will probably decamp to southern Serbia. Even this might be sustainable were it not that tens of thousands of Albanians live there under the rules of a very decent but fragile peace deal negotiated for the region in May 2001. None of these eventualities would benefit a newly independent Kosovo, which will be characterized, above all else, by economic weakness.

In public, all Serbian leaders rule out independence for Kosovo. In private, most concede that its loss is more or less inevitable.

In public, all Serbian leaders rule out independence. In private, most members of Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica's governing coalition, along with the Democratic Party of his rival, President Boris Tadic, concede that the loss of Kosovo is more or less inevitable. But if they are to transform their private assessment into public reality, they need a serious incentive. At the moment, it would be like turkeys voting for Christmas.

The EU possesses the very incentive required to smooth Kosovo's transition from a failing protectorate to an independent state free from the seeds of future conflict. If the EU were to suggest fast-tracking Serbia for EU membership, as it has done for Croatia, Serbia's leaders would have a real argument with which to convince the public that Kosovo's independence is not the worst of the many depressing options open to their country.

Unfortunately, creative policies for the Balkans have rarely issued from the EU or the United States. Furthermore, the political process is seriously hampered by the activities of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and its chief prosecutor, Carla del Ponte. Throughout her tenure, del Ponte has maintained that her role is solely judicial, not political. And yet she holds a veto on the progress of EU accession negotiations, which affords her immense political influence. It is not an influence that generally contributes to stability.

Haradinaj, just 36 years old, is the first leading Kosovar Albanian to be indicted by the tribunal. He heads the third-largest political party in the province, the AAK, and is seen as the chief rival of another young and very energetic Kosovo politician, Hashim Thaci, who heads the second-largest party, the PDK. Haradinaj's

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main power base is the west of the province. Elsewhere his appeal is limited but growing. He did not win a popular vote but secured the office of prime minister after last October's elections because the AAK held the balance of power. Jessen-Petersen's assessment of Haradinaj's political ability is probably fair: Since then he has injected some real dynamism into the political process.

Haradinaj's trip to The Hague (which is likely to last many years) coincides with several other surrenders to the ICTY that are also significant but have not received media attention in the West. Ten days before Haradinaj surrendered, Rasim Delic, the former chief of the Bosnian Army, who had earlier given himself up, appeared in court for the first time to hear the war crimes charges leveled against him. Then Momcilo Perisic, onetime head of the Yugoslav army, turned himself in; it is expected that Belgrade will hand over two other main suspects in the hope that this will move forward its tortured EU accession talks. Meanwhile, the EU told Croatia that unless it handed over its most wanted suspect, Ante Gotovina, by March 16 it would not be allowed to start final accession negotiations. Sure enough, the EU held firm and snatched the holy grail of final accession from the hands of the Croatian government after the deadline. This is a catastrophic blow to Zagreb—and one that some EU governments are unhappy about—as EU membership for Croatia is regarded as critical to the stability of the region. In the end, however, the EU concluded understandably that it would lose all political purchase on Serbia if it were to allow Gotovina through the net while insisting on Ratko Mladic et al. from Belgrade as a condition of progress in EU talks.

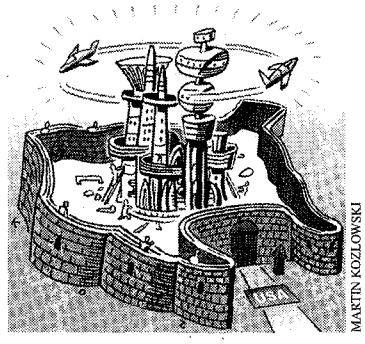
For all its destabilizing effects, the ICTY is a political reality, and for governments in the former Yugoslavia to resist its mandate is futile and self-defeating, and damaging to their long-term interests. The EU and the United States are exerting maximum pressure on all countries and territories in the region to comply with the ICTY in order to neutralize as soon as possible the negative impact of the demands for indictees to be handed over on the political process of reconciliation. This is because the crisis in the region is set to come to a head this summer. When the UN launched its flaccid negotiation process for Kosovo two years ago under the slogan "Standards Before Status," summer 2005 was set as the target for final-status talks to begin. If that deadline is not met, then KFOR, the international military force, is likely to face real difficulties. The last time Albanian frustration at the apparent lack of progress exploded was in March 2004, when the resentment of young Albanian males led to several days of province-wide mob rioting. The initial targets were Serbs, but the rioters also destroyed vehicles, buildings and other assets belonging to the UN and KFOR. All the international actors know that a repeat of this on a wider scale is a real possibility. If it were to happen again in the next year, the southern Balkans could no longer be at peace. ■

THE LOCKDOWN STRATEGY HAS MADE AMERICA LESS SAFE. THERE'S A BETTER APPROACH.

Security the Progressive Way

JOHN TIRMAN

The Democratic Party is missing a golden opportunity to beat the GOP on homeland security issues. Although the 2004 election hinged on Americans' concerns about domestic terrorism, the Democrats typically give the subject unimaginative or predictable responses: Spend more money for first responders, roll back the USA Patriot Act and plug the holes in America's very holey defenses against evildoers. There is a much more attractive option: Seize upon homeland security to reshape social and economic priorities.



MARTIN KOZLOWSKI

The Bush Administration strategy for homeland security that has gradually emerged from the trauma of 9/11 emphasizes preventive deterrence against Muslim communities in the United States, protection of dangerous facilities and enhanced capacity for police, firefighters and health professionals to respond to a terrorist attack. President Bush has consistently opted for "hardening" American society and its economy, the domestic counterpart of his antiterrorism campaign worldwide. The costs—in dollars, values and vulnerabilities—are very high, however, and the actual protection bought is uncertain.

The hardening of society began with a crackdown on Muslims in America. Terrorist-related prosecutions, harassment of Muslims and other Arab-Americans and surveillance and disruption in these communities has included at least 200,000 FBI interviews, "special registration" for thousands of Muslim men, as well as hundreds of deportations. All of this has produced no evidence of a domestic terrorist threat lurking in American society. In fact, the 9/11 Commission report could uncover no such plot, and the nearly 400 indictments by the Justice Department are a parade of inconsequential misdemeanors or actions unrelated to Al Qaeda. This is not just about civil liberties—there is a larger danger that Muslims are being targeted by federal authorities as a permanent internal threat. We are witnessing the re-emergence of a cold war culture in a new US security apparatus and compliant social and political institutions.

This is not to say there is no threat, of course. America still faces a risk of attacks by Al Qaeda from abroad, and the danger is growing as a result of the Iraq War.

The anti-Muslim juggernaut also twists the role of society

John Tirman, executive director of MIT's Center for International Studies, is co-author and editor of The Maze of Fear: Security and Migration After 9/11 *(New Press).*

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itself in protecting ourselves from terrorism. Alienating and isolating Muslims, Arab-Americans, South Asians and other immigrant communities is foolish on moral grounds and as a means to achieve antiterrorism goals. What we should be fostering from these communities is cooperation, not alienation.

But the Bush Administration is intentionally fostering mistrust and anxiety. Through the endless stream of higher alerts and its alarmist rhetoric, it is nurturing an ethos of fear as civic virtue. It sponsors, for example, programs in schools and civic education that emphasize being alert to the possibility of terrorists in one's community. As Steven Heydemann and Amaney Jamal point out in a new study for the Social Science Research Council, "Through such initiatives, the Corporation for National and Community Service and other government agencies, as well as nonprofit organizations linked to these agencies, are integrating norms of homeland security as a defining element in the broader relationship between citizens and government. It is being used to reframe commitments to civic education, with a special focus on bringing homeland security themes into K–12 curricula in public schools. It is also becoming more prominent in the governance of other activities long associated with the vitality of civic life in the United States, including volunteering, community service, and charitable giving."

Progressive policies could minimize risk, maximize ability to respond and fulfill goals of equity, community and sustainability.

A recent example is the expensive "public discourse project" of a new organization promoted by 9/11 Commission co-chairs Thomas Kean and Lee Hamilton: the America Prepared Campaign, which pushes an urgent, family regimen to "be ready" for terrorist attacks.

So Bush's version of homeland security—defined as a need to be watchful, suspicious and defensive—is the core value being promoted in federal education and other social initiatives. It seeps into popular culture, most notably in the odious television hit *24*, and combines neatly with right-wing religious ideologies. This is, to be sure, consistent: Bush is spending a colossal amount of money to toughen airport security, harden targets like the Washington Monument and intimidate the Arab world with military force, measures that might produce marginally more security. But along the way, he is insinuating values that breed mistrust of others at home and abroad.

Democrats have largely bought into the Bush policy, though in a lighter version. The sum of John Kerry's domestic security proposals last year was to plug holes in defenses (air cargo, ports, nuclear plants, etc.) and spend more money on first responders. But there is a much more attractive and assertive set of policies available that match up well with progressive priorities. American society could be activated in ways that integrate security with a new provision of social goods, providing tangible benefits for Americans while minimizing the nation's vulnerabilities to Al Qaeda and its successors.

Progressives are caught in a bind because no one knows whether the threat of terrorism is potentially catastrophic. How to respond? Instead of advocating the endless social and physical hardening that gains us little and incurs enormous costs—and looks like parroting of the White House—we could pursue policies that minimize risk and maximize the ability to respond. Along the way, other benefits would accrue, benefits that fulfill progressive goals of equity, community and sustainability.

Consider the nation's energy system. Today it is a complex of petroleum-based technologies and nuclear power plants, all of which are vulnerable in some way—equally true for the petrochemicals that are overused in manufacturing and agriculture. The conventional answer to these vulnerabilities is hardening: literally, as with cement barricades and containers, or via stepped-up surveillance and other security measures. Few if any political leaders ask if the system itself needs rethinking. A large-scale investment in renewable energy and conservation, for example, would yield results that might be more expensive than fossil fuels are currently, but would bring many safety and security benefits, and less pollution. (According to reports of the testimony of the captured Al Qaeda leader Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, one of his strategies was to steal gasoline delivery trucks and blow them up.) It would also address the petroleum dependency that is a root of the terrorism threat.

The most hazardous energy facilities are located in places where poor and working-class people live: They are most vulnerable, and they are least well protected. Vulnerabilities are not evenly distributed in society. When catastrophes strike, the poor suffer most. Eric Klinenberg's recent book *Heat Wave* shows graphically how a heat wave in Chicago most severely affected the poor and elderly; the tsunami in Asia is another grisly example. Redressing this imbalance, and improving society's overall resilience to terrorism, would include upgrading public health systems (for example, more neighborhood clinics), improving mass transit, developing alternatives to hazardous materials and their transport, and a myriad of other infrastructure reforms that would require social agreement to work optimally. Having local solar arrays or windmills to produce power is one example: Safe and clean energy should trump aesthetic concerns, but in any event would be subject to strong citizen participation. (This was Amory Lovins's insight more than a quarter-century ago, including its counterterrorism logic.) The benefits outweigh the sacrifices, however, and along the way we would garner an increase of trust in public institutions—the sense of equity and fair play—that are essential to a long-term antiterrorism effort.

That this vast reconfiguration of how we derive and use fuel, chemicals, etc. would be costly is an understatement. Rejiggering the energy system alone would reach into the trillions of dollars, and would have to include alternatives to the internal-combustion engine. (This will have to be done within fifty to seventy-five years anyway, because of declining global oil production.) Since 9/11, however, homeland security expenditures, both public and private, have totaled something like a half-trillion dollars, and this does not include the costs of military interventions in the Persian Gulf region since 1990.

Apart from new jobs in the security industries, these expenditures have produced little in the way of public goods or "social capital." We do not have better social or physical infrastructure, better schools or a stronger sense of justice. We do have more

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encumbrances, more mistrust, more anxiety—possibly greater security—but few if any outcomes for a better society.

Consider another example of creating social goods with enhanced security: improving the public health system. Building local public clinics to deal effectively with infectious diseases, immediate and unencumbered access for the uninsured, vaccination programs, attention to children and youth, and so on would provide protection in these specific areas, and would also create a new opportunity to reach people in the underserved areas that are most exposed to the risk of disasters and social dislocations of all kinds. Such clinics serve as educational platforms as well as health providers. And, in the process, they would demonstrate a level of caring in society that is now spotty at best.

In the unlikely event of a biological-weapon or similar attack, a layer of protection would be in place, one that not only could provide health services but would be an empowering link in an essential social network. Consider how anthrax or other "bioterror" diseases manifest themselves—often with only gradually worsening symptoms—and how reluctant uninsured people are to go to a hospital, even when they are ill. A bolstered public health system—nationwide, connected, technically sophisticated and trained for multiple threats, terrorism included—would be a layer of defense; it would demonstrate to the public that the government is serious about reducing vulnerabilities; and it would have manifold benefits for combating other diseases and social ills.

Reducing vulnerabilities does not mean Al Qaeda cannot strike America. By reducing the number of potential catastrophe targets, however, and by bolstering the social and physical infrastructure of response, the possibilities for suffering a debilitating loss are reduced. But if reducing vulnerabilities simply means hardening, with no effort to decrease vulnerabilities, and social response is based purely on fear rather than positive inducements, then it will be difficult to sustain attention to and investment in homeland defenses. The "securitization" of America will remain expensive and paranoid, while the most important elements of improving security through social organization will be forfeited.

A reconstruction of energy choices, public health, mass transit and trust in government seems a daunting task. But a precedent for undertaking such vast social change is visible in "how we have come to manage the safety imperative over the past century," as Stephen Flynn, a former White House security adviser, notes in his book *America the Vulnerable*. Enormous strides were made in everything from flame-retardant children's clothing to food safety to the handling of hazardous materials in manufacturing. The economy adapted, and in fact new industries and jobs were created to provide this added layer of safety. Over this same period, safety became a broader social concern—safety in schools, safe access for the handicapped, safety in driving, safety in the natural environment, safety in relationships. While this was hardly a seamless triumph, the safety issue was engaged broadly, in part because ordinary people could see beyond the costs and inconveniences to the benefits for themselves and their communities. As Flynn notes, "If we are smart in how we construct a security deterrent, we will achieve other benefits."

Thinking about homeland security in this same way would give progressives a decided edge in the debate about how best to protect Americans in the age of global terrorism. Does America want

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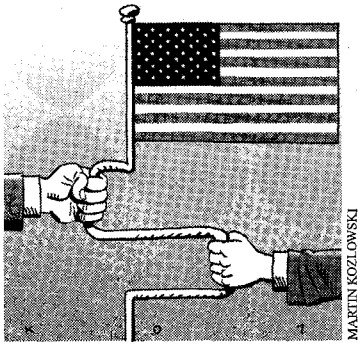
to deal with vulnerabilities arising from its petroleum facilities? Then get serious about reducing petroleum dependencies. Does America want to have a truly effective first-responder system? Then get serious about dispersing and upgrading public health networks. Does America want to enhance trust in the public institutions needed to combat terrorism? Then get serious about building public institutions that deserve respect, provide services, protect civil liberties and expand public goods.

Every war—indeed, every great national challenge—has not only demanded sacrifice but has reordered social relations and yielded new public goods in return. World War II, for example, brought the GI Bill, advances in racial integration and other such rewards. It is worth examining that tradition and reinventing it as a galvanizing core of a progressive antiterrorism agenda. ■

CHALLENGING A MISTAKEN WAR CAN TAKE MORE COURAGE THAN FIGHTING ONE.

Patriotism Is Nonpartisan

GEORGE McGOVERN



MARTIN KOZLOWSKI

There is a notion abroad in American politics, carefully crafted by its proponents, that is both disturbing and false. It is especially disturbing to me personally because it is frequently associated with my campaign for the presidency in 1972. The notion is that my party, and especially its standard-bearer of '72, are not interested in the defense and security of America. Nor, according to this notion, do we care about marriage and the family, the sacredness of human life and the things of the spirit. Perhaps my views are outdated, but I have always assumed that every American cares about these values; consequently, they are not issues for partisan exploitation.

What is the truth as I see it?

First and foremost, I have believed since childhood that my country is the greatest nation on the face of the earth. Never once during my long years as a public servant did I drive down Pennsylvania Avenue to my office at the US Capitol—past the majestic memorials to George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln—without experiencing the genuine thrill of knowing that I worked for the US government and its citizens. One of my young daughters observed to a playmate as we drove by the Capitol one evening long ago, "That's my daddy's office."

There has not been a day in my life that I would not have proudly sacrificed that life in the defense of America. Following the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, as a college sophomore, I promptly volunteered for the Army Air Corps and flew thirty-five missions as the pilot of a B-24 bomber. Half of the bomber crews flying with me did not survive the war, including my navigator and dear friend Sam Adams of Milwaukee. That was a terrifying, destructive war, but I have never experienced an hour of regret over my part in helping to smash Hitler's ruthless war machine. America had no honorable course except to halt the worldwide, murderous aggression of the Axis powers—including the unspeakable Holocaust that murdered 6 million Jews.

When I entered the US Senate in 1963, eighteen years after World War II, America was involved in a vastly different kind of war in the jungles of Vietnam. I was convinced that our leaders had embarked on a course that, however well intentioned, could only end in disaster. Over the next decade I sounded the alarm against what I believed was a tragedy for the young Americans dying in the Southeast Asian quagmire, a tragedy for the people of America and a tragedy for the people of Vietnam, whose country was devastated and 2 million of whom were killed. That war became the central issue of my successful bid for the presidential nomination and the subsequent campaign in which I was defeated by the incumbent President, Richard Nixon.

Had I lost the courage to resist the enemy that I had demonstrated in World War II? The truth is that it took more courage as a junior senator to stand up in the Senate and challenge the war policy of our government in Vietnam than it did to fly combat missions in World War II. My first warnings against our deepening involvement in Vietnam were delivered when public opinion polls in South Dakota were reporting that 80 percent of my constituents supported the war. I assumed that this spelled defeat for me in the next election—a one-term senator.

But looking back on those early years after eighteen years in the Senate and as a presidential nominee, I am as proud of my effort to stop the needless slaughter in Vietnam as I am of my participation in World War II. In both cases, I was guided by patriotism and love of my country. But men who had never known a day of military combat worked ceaselessly—especially in 1972—to paint me as a weakling unwilling to defend the nation. Of course, I did not stand alone in opposing the looming disaster in Asia. Such senators as Fulbright, Mansfield, Church, Gruening, Morse, Nelson and Hatfield were adamantly against the war. But I was also seeking the presidency, which made me a special target of the war exponents.

Another factor that made me a convenient punching bag was my effort to curtail some aspects of the Pentagon budget that appeared to be wasteful and needless. I frequently quoted President Eisenhower's great farewell address, in which he warned of the mounting power of "the military-industrial complex" and its unwarranted influence in our society. It seemed to me then, as it does today, that more is required for the defense and security of

George McGovern was a US senator from South Dakota from 1962 to 1980 and the Democratic candidate for President in 1972.

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America than simply giving over what this year will be half of the federal discretionary budget to the Pentagon. But here again, a senator risks the political danger of being branded as weak on defense if he applies the same common-sense examination to military spending that is applied to other sources of American strength, such as healthcare, education, the environment or full employment.

It was also politically troubling to critics that my maiden speech in the Senate forty-two years ago was aimed at our government's policy of isolating and boycotting Cuba—a self-defeating policy we still pursue. No such policy was pursued toward the Communist giants—Russia and China. Somehow our strategists thought it wise to seek détente with Moscow and recognition of China as a "most favored nation" trading partner—which, of course, it was—but unwise to build such a relationship with our little Cuban neighbor. What have we been so fearful of in Cuba—their cigars and rum? Or is it the oratory of Fidel Castro, who has outlasted nine American Presidents of both parties? Is common sense dead when it comes to our Cuba policy? Or is this the best way to carry Florida at election time?

Old-fashioned American liberals such as I are accused not only of being weak on defense but also weak on marriage and the family, the work ethic and reverence for religious faith. I resent such groundless political slurs. After all, I hold the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. I have been happily married to the same woman for sixty-one years and am the father of five children and ten grandchildren—all of whom I love dearly, including dear, deceased Terry. As the son of a Wesleyan Methodist clergyman, I dare say that my life has always been enriched and guided by the Judeo-Christian ethic. Nothing has influenced my philosophy more than the Hebrew prophets and the Sermon on the Mount. Beyond this, I have worked hard at useful tasks throughout my life and thank God I still have the health and motivation to continue that work schedule at the age of 82. Of course, I share one of my father's oft-quoted biblical lines: "All of us have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

So many challenges face us at home and abroad that we should not waste time, tolerance and good will debating which politician loves America most ardently, which one is most devoted to marriage and the family and which one is closest to the Almighty. I've never known a political leader in either party who was disloyal to America, or who scoffed at marriage and the family, or who disrespected God and religious faith. Republicans and Democrats alike are pro-American, pro-freedom, pro-life, pro-family and pro–God Almighty. When we are sworn into public office, we all place our left hand on the Bible while raising our right hand and swearing to uphold the Constitution. It is worth noting that this sacred ceremony requires each of us to use both arms—a left wing and right wing!

Recently, the officers and enlisted personnel of Ellsworth Air Force Base at Rapid City, South Dakota, in the magnificent Black Hills under the shadow of Mount Rushmore, named a B-1 bomber "The Dakota Queen"—the name of the B-24 bomber I flew in World War II, so titled in recognition of my wife, Eleanor. After a moving ceremony attended by Eleanor and me, one of the junior officers said to me, "Senator, I don't know whether it bothers you to be called a left-wing liberal, but just remember, a plane can't fly without both a left wing and a right wing!" That is the kind of common sense that prompts my admiration and to which I say Amen and God bless us one and all—even those of God's children who are unmarried, or have deeper love for those of their own sex than of the opposite sex. In the Methodist parsonage where I was reared I was taught that we should be cautious about judging one another. Such judgments are more properly left to the Algmighty rather than to the political hustings and the quest for partisan advantage. ■

LETTERS
CONTINUED

(Continued From Page 2)

nately encountering the destructive policies the article so accurately describes.

We've developed and successfully replicated a model that has proved its potential to advance not solely economic democracy and entrepreneurship but to shift the balance of power between giant corporations and communities. Yet foundations claiming to fund systemic change or community development tell us we don't fit their definitions or are not focused narrowly enough on certain demographics.

While the authors' urgings for nonprofits to explore economic self-sufficiency are important, I'm not ready to let progressive foundations continue their losing ways unchallenged. They have the massive potential to help advance the progressive movement far faster than we can move without them. Progressives campaign against corporations to stop negative practices; why not apply the same pressure to foundations?

JENNIFER ROCKNE
American Independent Business Alliance
Chicago

■ "Profits for Justice" argues for progressive nonprofits to begin breaking their dependence on foundations and other big funders by setting up their own socially responsible businesses, but there's something else they can do: Heartof.com is a socially responsible business designed to create a revenue stream for any progressive organization that wants it. It's an online shopping mall that sells nothing of its own but links to more than 340 well-known retailers. When a shopper visits heartof.com and clicks, for example, on the Office Depot link, he or she cybertrips over to its website and buys, say, paper for the next mass mailing. Office Depot then pays a referral fee to heartof.com, which sends the bulk of that fee to the progressive organization. An organization that encourages its supporters to use heartof.com creates revenue that will grow as increasing numbers of its supporters shop online. And unlike revenue flowing from foundations, funders or in-house business ventures, it can't threaten that organization's progressive agenda.

FRANK T. FITZGERALD
Founder, heartof.com

THE EX-TERMINATOR?

Hollis, NH

■ Apropos the troubles of Tom DeLay [Robert Grossman, "Glimmer of Hope Department," March 28]:

Patty-cake, patty-cake,
Tommy the Hammerer,
How will you spend your
Days in the slammerer?
Like Jonah the Whaler,
Bible-believingly?
Arranging revenges,
Like Vlad the Impaler? ROBERT MUELLER

CLARIFICATION

■ The woman featured on our March 28 cover was Cindy Sheehan, holding a picture of her son Casey, killed in Iraq in April 2004.

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COMMENT

(Continued From Page 11)

"I don't suggest using sticks lightly," he said. "They're a very dangerous thing to get started because they can result in retaliation and so forth." But they can also work, Bergsten responded. "Absolutely," Peterson said.

These events also pose a large domestic political risk for the multinationals: When "responsible" players break the taboo and talk up tariffs, it could ignite a more honest public debate on globalization. The major news media seem not to have noticed that Democratic leaders and some conservative Republicans are waving the big stick. The establishment probably prefers that this remain an inside-the-Beltway story. Why confuse the public with front-page stories explaining that tariffs are actually useful and legal? Organized labor and others should make sure this story becomes big news. People might begin to ask deeper questions. If free-trade agreements are the road to greater US prosperity, how did the United States wind up in this deep hole? If the government is willing to invoke the tariff weapon to protect US financial interests, why can't it use it to protect US workers and jobs? Why does US trade policy serve the multinational interests but not the nation as a whole? The trade crisis is a new opening in politics, but its origins are bipartisan, spawned by Republican and Democratic Presidents adhering to the orthodoxy. Imagine if John Kerry had had the nerve last year to talk about an emergency tariff to protect America. He might have carried Ohio. WILLIAM GREIDER

Old Women in the Cold

My 91-year-old friend Alice, like many elderly women, has outlived her modest savings. All that stands between her and destitution is the $800 check she receives from Social Security and small contributions from a handful of caring friends and relatives. She is not alone. The Institute for Women's Policy Research in Washington, DC, estimates that half the women over 65 would fall into poverty without Social Security income because 70 percent of Social Security beneficiaries over 85 are women. For one-third of all unmarried female seniors, Social Security is, in fact, their only source of income.

Worried that his privatization plan is in peril, George W. Bush has been touting its benefits to widows. But they regard his proposals with particular suspicion. Since women tend to live longer than men and spend fewer years in the workforce, they depend more heavily on Social Security during the last years of their lives. They therefore stand to lose the most if they don't have a guaranteed safety net when they are seniors.

But do women of all ages understand their stake in this debate? An army of economists and pundits have vigorously debunked the President's spurious claims that Social Security is in "crisis" and that its trust fund will go "bankrupt" in 2042. What they don't publicize, however, is that the President's plan for private accounts would deepen the crisis faced by vast numbers of elderly women.

To educate women, the National Council of Women's Organizations, which represents almost 200 women's groups with more than 10 million members, held a national press conference in early February to express its strong opposition to private accounts. Heidi Hartmann, president of the Institute for Women's Policy Research, wants women—who earn a median salary of $30,000—to understand that "Social Security provides women with life insurance, disability income, and spousal benefits, and all of these will be at risk if privatizers have their way."

The Bush Administration naturally has it own network of female cheerleaders. Among them is the Independent Women's Forum, whose job is to fabricate the ideal of the self-made woman who requires no help from anyone, a rugged individualist who can pull herself up by the straps on her stiletto pumps. Just who is this independent self-made woman? Ask the millions of working women who do the unpaid work of caring for their children and their elderly parents or spouses if they need any assistance from social services. Ask the millions of women who work for low wages at Wal-Mart, nursing homes or other women's homes if they feel like independent self-made women.

Professional women—the real target audience courted by the Independent Women's Forum—may seem like rugged individualists, but scratch the veneer and you'll often find that they have benefited from generous state fellowships, government loans, parental sacrifice or wealthy husbands. Scratch a little deeper and you'll also discover that it was the women's movement and affirmative action that gave the "self-made woman" a chance to walk through what were once closed doors. The Independent Women's Forum, for example, wants to persuade me that I'm a self-made woman. But I'm not. Back when Nelson Rockefeller, a moderate Republican, was governor, New York State paid for my undergraduate education. The citizens of California, who once understood that a highly skilled workforce is what would fuel California's economic engine, funded my doctoral education. As a result of affirmative action, universities began hiring women faculty members, and I repaid my debt for all this assistance by teaching thousands of university students. The truth is that hardly anyone is "self-made." Every day, we use sewer systems, ride on Interstate highways or subways, surf the Internet and send kids to schools that we created by investing in our society's public life.

Crucial as it is for women's long-term economic security, Social Security is not perfect; even now it discriminates against low-income workers, the majority of whom are women, because they pay more than their fair share of the payroll taxes that fund the system. So what's the solution? Why not exempt people who earn less than $30,000 from payroll taxes? Instead of keeping the cap at $90,000, why not raise it so that the wealthiest among us, those with the greatest financial security, can help those with the least? With this one progressive change, Social Security would bulge with surplus funds well into the next century.

We live in a world in which none of us know who will lose a job or become ill and need a helping hand. Real reform in Social Security should express our core conviction that we're not isolated, self-made men and women but a society of individuals who should care for the most vulnerable. It is not only unfair to allow elderly women to live in poverty—it's also immoral. RUTH ROSEN

Ruth Rosen, professor emerita of history at the University of California, is the author of The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America *(Penguin).*

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

The Imagination of Disaster

LEE SIEGEL

SATURDAY.
By Ian McEwan.
Doubleday. 289 pp. $26.

Saturday begins with its main character, Henry Perowne, getting out of bed because he's unable to sleep and going to stand by an open window. It is a chilly night, a Friday night, a few hours before dawn. Henry sees a plane heading toward Heathrow. Suddenly, the plane bursts into flames. Henry's attention is riveted on the descending aircraft. Almost two and a half years after the attacks on 9/11 gripped the public consciousness, this brilliant middle-aged neurosurgeon fears another upending of reality. But what has really happened is that public consciousness has finally caught up with Ian McEwan's vision of life.

McEwan is David Hume's novelistic heir. Hume held that what passes for rational certainty is actually an irrational belief based on customs or repeated experiences. As he wrote in his most famous example, we expect that the sun will rise tomorrow because our experience has been that the sun rises every day, but there is no way to prove that it will. We've simply gotten used to the custom of day following night. Watching the burning plane as it moves closer and closer to densely populated London, Henry finds himself occupying a place in life at which all McEwan's protagonists eventually arrive—usually within the opening pages of a novel. Their accustomed world is about to fall to pieces. For them, it's a long time before the sun rises with dependable regularity again, if it ever does.

An encounter with a stranger on a street in Venice twists the fate of a young couple in McEwan's *The Comfort of Strangers*. The main character in *The Child in Time* loses his daughter to a kidnapper during a visit to the supermarket. A pair of rabid canines brings down the curtain on routine habits of mind in *Black Dogs*. In *Enduring Love*, it's the crash of a hot-air balloon; in *Amsterdam*, a death that wreaks havoc on an old friendship; in *Atonement*, a rape followed by a false accusation and wrongful imprisonment. There is a shattering bolt from the blue in nearly all of McEwan's novels.

But this quietly spectacular writer is not only laying his finger on the fragile spine of mortality. He has captured an essential quality of the bourgeois, consumerist West. He has caught its obsession with the Transfiguring Event, an obsession that reaches its most intense degree in open, vulnerable, self-conscious societies, and especially in America, where so much cultural, commercial and psychological energy is spent maintaining the illusion of a secure and gratifying present that will never end.

Americans are fascinated by the positive effects of the sudden life-changing situation in the same way that we are enthralled by the chimera of self-transformation. Is there a culture in the world that has our almost eschatological expectation of the lucky (romantic, professional, financial) break? In boxing, there is the knockout; in reality television, the final decision. The fundamental psychology behind advertising strategy is to present a purchase as a revolutionary, life-changing act. American public life is full of sudden, sensational exposures of some kind of malfeasance as the key to a personality.

Ian McEwan is the reigning poet of the transfiguring event, and of the murky psychology that sudden catastrophe engenders.

There is also the trial, before which Americans sit rapt because an actual courtroom drama is a life-changing event in the making, as well as the prolonged annotation of the life-changing event that caused it. Then there's the endless prescription-making, finger-pointing and trend-proclaiming in the aftermath of an isolated disaster, with the purpose of making calamity a stimulus toward positive change or at least "closure." The majority of Hollywood movies wouldn't exist without a decisive event. (Indeed, McEwan, many of whose novels have been made into

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films, has unassumingly revolutionized the novel by refining into art Hollywood's mythic immediacy, not only by finding a deeper imaginative place for the transfiguring event but by inventing a new kind of sentence—at once tactile and visual—and by creating paragraphs that have a unique, wandering, cinematic plenitude.)

But the underside of this fascination with good life-changing moments is terror that all our peace and comfort will be swept away by a bad life-changing moment. The religion of the transfiguring event cuts both ways. The amount of money and effort spent in this country on preserving the fantasy that peace and comfort will be with us forever is staggering. Yet we are surrounded by brute facts to the contrary. So we live between expectation of a sudden event producing happiness and expectation of a sudden event ruining our good fortune. We inhabit a space of restless disquiet, and into that space popular culture introduces cathartic visions of disruptions, destructions, calamities, betrayals, gratifications, fulfillments and healings. When the 9/11 attacks happened, they fell right into the waiting hands of a country obsessed with the dark and the bright sides of sudden change.

They also fell right into the waiting hands of McEwan, the reigning poet of the transfiguring event, and of the murky, contradictory psychology it engenders. *Saturday*'s narrator reflects, "The government's counsel—that an attack in a European or American city is an inevitability—isn't only a disclaimer of responsibility, it's a heady promise. Everyone fears it, but there's also a darker longing in the collective mind, a sickening for self-punishment and a blasphemous curiosity." In America, the ambiguity behind the reaction to September 11 lacked a similar masochistic twinge. The events of that day were followed by ghoulish sighs of relief from some American commentators at the prospect of other Americans' liberation from narcissism, isolationism, incompetence at history and geography, etc. And now we've sublimated our zeal for and our terror of sudden change into an effort to transform distant lands through war.

Saturday unfolds over twenty-four hours in February 2003, on the day of the massive demonstration in London against the invasion of Iraq. Driving to his weekly Saturday squash game with his squash partner, the "physically affectionate, energetic, direct in manner" American anesthesiologist Jay Strauss, Henry Perowne bends a traffic rule with the permission of a distracted policeman, finds himself on a deserted street not far from a pub called the Jeremy Bentham, and gets into a car accident with a volatile, thuggish guy named Baxter. As the city fills with the sounds of hundreds of thousands of marching protesters, the highly cultivated neurologist haughtily insults the lower-class Baxter, who assaults Henry. But the doctor, noticing Baxter's trembling hands and turbulent mood swings, realizes that his assailant has the beginnings of Huntington's disease, and he wriggles out of a beating by falsely telling Baxter that he can help him find treatment for what is in fact an incurable condition. Henry succeeds in confusing his attacker and makes his escape. But a humiliated Baxter develops a dangerous obsession with Henry that eventually puts the surgeon, his lawyer-wife Rosalind, two children and famous-poet father-in-law at risk of being murdered.

McEwan's characters clutch for illusions as one might reach for trees and rocks while tumbling down the side of a mountain.

Two transfiguring events shape the novel. There is the car accident, which echoes the sudden upheaval of 9/11, and which brings into Henry's life Baxter, a disenfranchised person, who is a kind of echo of the hatred and anger of the disenfranchised, militant, impoverished Third World. Certainly he poses to Henry the ethical challenge presented by poor, starving countries to the affluent West, and Henry treats him—unthinkingly, innocently—with a reflexive contempt not unlike the West's indifference to the Third World. He also poses to the suddenly vulnerable Henry a threat of annihilation similar to the threats made against the West. These possible implicit resonances are impressions, associations, intuitions that grow entwined with other plausible meanings as the story begins to strike the primal chords of myth. They never acquire the independent meaning of a neat allegorical subtext.

But the fundamental transfiguring event in *Saturday* is 9/11, and also what you might call—at the time when the novel takes place—that day's shadow event, the looming war in Iraq. Henry's inability to make clear, decisive sense of 9/11, or of the justification for war, is the hothouse atmosphere in which he tries to figure out what, if any, his responsibilities are toward Baxter. Thus the Jeremy Bentham pub, named after the famous philosopher of self-interest, and the complicating details of the traffic infraction, and the policeman's blind eye—a suspension of the rules not available to people like Baxter—and Henry's arrogance, and Baxter's helpless susceptibility to the violent impulses stirred up by his illness.

Though it includes some political argument—mostly between Henry and his twentyish daughter Daisy, a gifted poet—*Saturday* is not a political book. Like nearly all of McEwan's work, his latest novel is about the sudden relativizing of perspective in the wake of startling change, though Henry is more resigned to his uncertainties than abruptly transformed or nearly destroyed by them, as are most of McEwan's protagonists. McEwan's fiction explores the illusions and delusions that people clutch for as they scramble to readapt to a new mental landscape, just as they might reach for trees and rocks if they found themselves tumbling down the side of a mountain. This makes him the perfect novelist to write about 9/11 and its aftermath. No two people in his novels attach the same significance to the same event. The meaning of September 11 is, at this moment, likewise up for grabs. No one can say in any clear, decisive way what 9/11 signifies in political or historical terms. No honest person, that is.

The meaning of transfiguring events in McEwan's work is always a private affair. After Joe Rose, the science writer in *Enduring Love*, fails to rescue a man in a hot-air balloon, he begins to doubt his courage and his ability to transcend his own self-interest to save another person's life—something like the questions that preoccupy Henry Perowne. For Jed Parry, a stranger who also tries to help with the balloon, the accident is the beginning of a mad obsession with Rose—something like Baxter's fixation on Henry. For Clarissa, Joe's wife, Joe's stricken conscience is silly, and his (accurate) claim that Parry is stalking him is a symptom of Joe's declining sanity.

In *Black Dogs*, the attack of a pair of rabid hounds on a woman convinces her that evil is real, a revelation that causes her to withdraw from the world into religion; the same event strengthens her husband's radical scientific opposition to religion, producing an irreparable break between them. Yet the attack leads to a fortuitous event that holds their estranged family together. In *The Child in Time*, the loss of a child brings out the lost child hidden within a bereft father, who begins to see behind adult pretense a vast scrimmage of childlike egos and appetites, no two grown-ups sharing the same values except through the miraculous dis-

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pensation of love. The death of a mutual former lover fills the two old friends in *Amsterdam* with a mortal dread that alters each one's sense of reality in very different ways, propelling them along divergent paths of delusion until they fatally collide. In *The Comfort of Strangers*, murder follows inevitably from the contrasting inner lives of the killers, a deceptively innocent English couple, and their victims, a decadent Venetian husband and wife: a difference between responses to erotic impulse that is like the difference between civilizations.

But the *pièce de résistance* of clashing perceptions in McEwan is *Atonement*, a tale about a vain little girl named Briony with an ambitious imagination, who sends the wrong man to jail based on her stubborn, frightened, indignant misperception of who did what to whom. In the novel's final pages, the narrator discloses that she is that same little girl, now an elderly professional writer. Yet the wonder of *Atonement* is that it is not self-referential; it is not "literary" in the slightest way. Briony's retelling of the events she caused does not amount to the postmodern argument of an "unreliable narrator" (*a k a* "invitation to a nap"). It is an instance of a woman deceiving other people because she is still selfishly deceiving herself.

Briony wrote her story as an "atonement" for the pain she caused, but her novel is really the same assertion of ego that caused all the pain in the first place. The only fact that she changed in her tale, she tells us, is the fate of its two lovers, her older sister and the man the young Briony wrongly accused of raping their cousin. The narrator reunites them at the end of *Atonement* when, in actuality, they died young, before they could marry and make a life together. You believe the older Briony because she has no reason to lie, now that she is nearing the end of her life. Yet her fabrication of a happy ending is also a sort of trick. By admitting that she lied about the couple's fate at the end, she is implying that in life, and in honest art, there are no happy endings—serious, honest novels aren't written as therapeutic "atonements" to clear the conscience of their authors. This is true, but if human existence affords no happy endings, then the tragedy Briony created is less her fault than an inevitable outcome. Her revelation that the couple died young turns her "atonement" into self-exculpation.

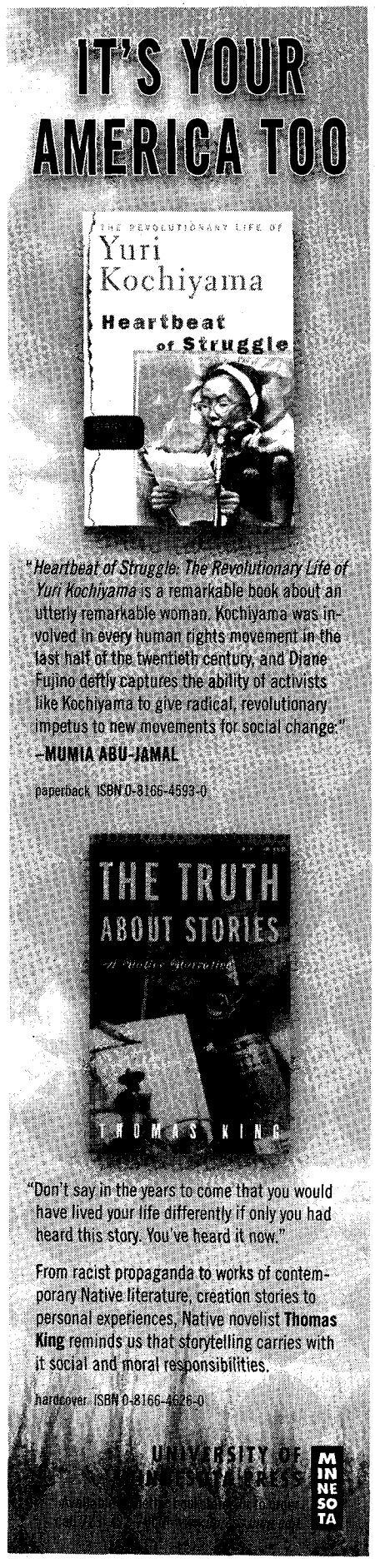
But Briony has still produced a moral achievement. She has sympathetically inhabited the lives of other people. Describing her aspiring young literary self, the older narrator has the girl overheatedly anticipate that as a novelist she will enjoy "the prospect of freedom, of being delivered from the cumbrous struggle between good and bad, heroes and villains.... It wasn't only wickedness and scheming that made people unhappy, it was confusion and misunderstanding; above all, it was the failure to grasp the simple truth that other people are as real as you."

Briony is right; life is too confusing, too compounded by misunderstanding to be a simple matter of Good vs. Bad. But it is self-serving for Briony, who once caused tragic confusion—who once did something clearly wrong—to embrace moral ambiguity. The book is at once an act of redemption—Briony has opened herself up to the lives of other people—and a disingenuous alibi, since she produces more confusion by telling another lie. In its restrained portrayal of truth, goodness and love as relative and illusory, yet also thickly, concretely, consequentially real—two simultaneously defining qualities—*Atonement* crystallizes McEwan's themes.

The semisubjective mist of a world half-created by projecting egos; the haze of illusions so necessary that they become stubborn realities, only to vanish suddenly; the fact of impermanence as a permanent condition, which is an enlightening truth revealed only in moments of sheer terror—this is McEwan's primal matter. Perhaps this is why, more and more, he brings a scientific perspective into his books. Science seems to offer him an Archimedean point from which to view, with varying degrees of irony, the helter-skelter human sagas created by the phantasms of mind and emotion. In fact, McEwan is the only serious novelist today who can convincingly integrate science into his work. But science, for all its hard objectivity, only brings the mystery of subjectivity into sharper view. As Henry muses to himself:

> Just like the digital codes of replicating life held within DNA, the brain's fundamental secret will be laid open one day. But even when it has, the wonder will remain, that mere wet stuff can make this bright inward cinema of thought, of sight and sound and touch bound into a vivid illusion of an instantaneous present, with a self, another brightly wrought illusion, hovering like a ghost at its centre. Could it ever be explained, how matter becomes conscious?

Saturday is a commentary on how politics gets invented from the stuff of emotion the way mind is created out of the brain. Read (and written) in the light of events following the Iraq invasion, this carefully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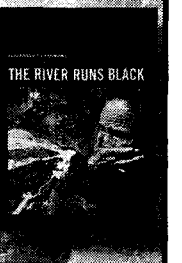

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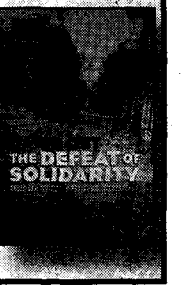

The Nation Button Initiative

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Millions of American citizens are terrified over their financial future because of President Bush's wrongheaded plan for privatizing Social Security. As usual with this Administration, the details and the consequences of this misguided proposal are not clearly stated. There is no evidence that privatization will benefit anyone but the financial marketeers who will manage the plan. Join us in the good fight to protect every American's future. Send $10 for three of these large buttons.

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ambiguous tale about the "brightly wrought illusion" of unstable selves amounts to a cool, temperate, humane protest against belligerent certainty. Indeed, ambiguity is inscribed in the novel's very title. Saturday is the holiest day of the week for some people and just an ordinary day for others, a crucial discrepancy in a book haunted by religious conflict.

Henry's consciousness is haunted by his awareness of the mind's inherent instability, its mutability and fragility. His mother has Alzheimer's and her identity has disintegrated. Reading a biography of Darwin that his daughter Daisy gave him as a gift, Henry is unsettled by the fact of mortality; he is struck "by how easily an existence, its ambitions, networks of family and friends, all its cherished stuff, solidly possessed, could so entirely vanish." Recalling the day they cleared out his mother's house after taking her to a nursing home, he remembers thinking at the time that "her life, all lives, seemed tenuous when he saw how quickly, with what ease, all the trappings, all the fine details of a lifetime could be packed and scattered, or junked." You could say that this is a state of mind imported into our lives by the attacks on 9/11. But in the context of McEwan's world, Henry's obsessions are also the universal mental soil—the comfortable and technologically protected yet, for that very reason, open and vulnerable Western mind—that has allowed 9/11 to provide moral, political and intellectual pretexts out of all proportion to the events of that day.

McEwan seems to craft Henry as a kind of Western Everyman of the privileged variety. He is rational, capable, cultured, happy and good—he is more decent than most people, despite his upper-class complacency. He is faithful to his wife, whom he deeply loves, archly wondering at one point if his lack of interest in acquiring a younger mistress is the result of some kind of character defect. He deeply loves his children—McEwan's sympathetic inhabiting of Theo, Henry's teenage son, a blues guitarist, beautifully alive and tender, and his account of Theo's playing is, like his evocation of music in *Amsterdam*, as uncannily intuitive as his breathtaking descriptions of Henry operating on the brain. McEwan is not only the greatest living writer in England; now that Bellow has stopped writing, and now that Roth's mastery of *le mot juste* has exploded into a brilliant but often undisciplined torrent of *mots*, McEwan is writing better English prose than anybody. The Nobel Prize committee could start making itself respectable again by giving him the nod.

Given Henry's self-knowledge, his gifts and his humanity, you're tempted to iden-

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tify his views with the narrator's. His reasons for supporting an Iraq invasion are conscientious, anguished, half-hearted and based mostly on accounts of Saddam Hussein's atrocities that he's heard from an Iraqi exile named Professor Taleb, one of Saddam's victims and Henry's patient (though Henry is something of a dove in reaction to the hawkish Strauss). Henry is an admirable man, and you smile when you learn that he has no intention of reading the unnamed fiction by Joseph Conrad his daughter has given him. Henry's salvation lies in his self-forgetful work ("work—the ultimate badge of health") the concrete unambiguity of surgery; in *Heart of Darkness*, the only sanctuary from nothingness is skeptical, decent Marlow's self-forgetful labors on the concrete unambiguity of his boat's engine.

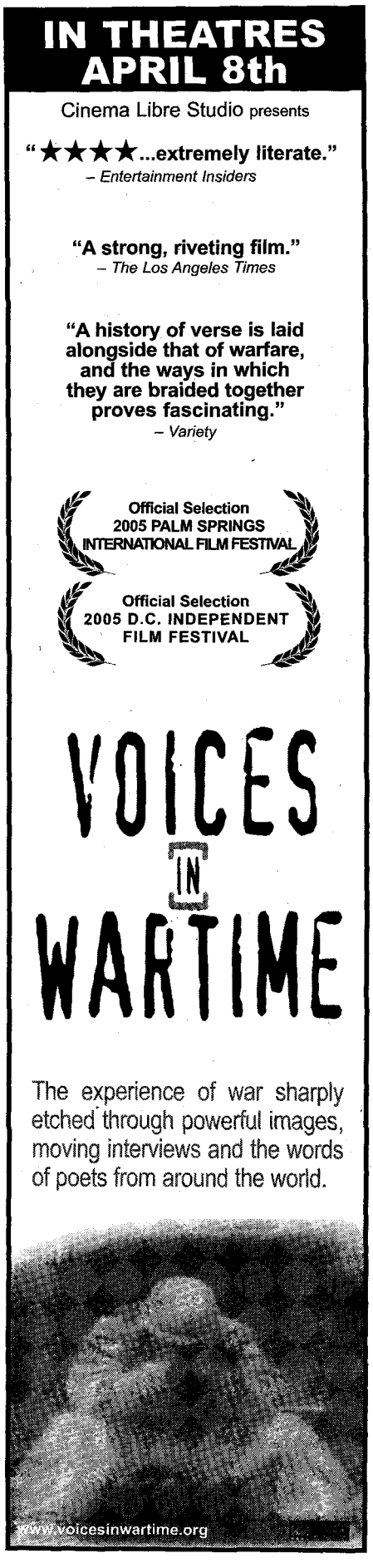
But it would be a mistake to confuse Henry with the narrator, or with the novel's essential meaning, or with the author himself. McEwan always surrounds his main characters with a space of gentle irony; *Atonement* is where his detachment shows its hand. In *Saturday*, he meticulously qualifies Henry's perspective, first by giving Daisy's arguments against the war greater prescience, then by having Henry's intellectual outlook ride volatilely on his emotions. In the novel's opening pages Henry, spooked by the burning plane, recalls with alarm the British political scientist Fred Halliday's prediction (*Saturday* has numerous references to real people, so lighthandedly done that the novel gains a type of fictional fourth dimension) that 9/11 began a world crisis that would "take a hundred years to resolve." Later, driving his new Mercedes, feeling confident and prosperous, Henry remembers a statement by the famous British immunologist, Peter Medawar, who also happened to be of Arab descent: "To deride the hopes of progress is the ultimate fatuity." Halliday's lugubrious forecast is nonsense, Henry reassures himself. But hours afterward, when he promises Baxter that treatment is available for his disease, a note of hope that is an echo of Medawar's "hopes of progress," Baxter reacts with contemptuous disbelief, and Henry thinks to himself that Baxter "is right to pick up on the fatuity, the feebleness of the idea." Not only does Henry abandon his optimism about progress—the reversal turns stunningly on the word "fatuity"—he tries to use the illusion of progress to trick a man whom society has left behind.

McEwan virtuosically molds theme out of the modulations of character in just this way. In the novel's concluding pages, he even sets Henry up for an upheaval after the book ends. He has Henry taking stock at home as Saturday is about to pass into Sunday, complacently predicting the future to himself, mapping out his life, and Rosalind's, his children's and his mother's. But he is building these certainties about the future at the end of a day when all of his fundamental certainties have been undermined. Like all plan-making human creatures, Henry is going to be surprised by the future, a boundary that defines the limits of anyone's perspective.

Casting doubt on the power of mind to organize reality must be why McEwan has chosen as the novel's epigraph a long passage from Saul Bellow's *Herzog* (aside from the odd fact that every British writer with an intellectual or emotional stake in America tries to lay claim to Bellow. He is their Plymouth Rock, or maybe their Rhodesia. Or maybe it's just that he won the Nobel Prize). McEwan, however, makes deep, authentic use of Bellow. *Herzog* is a novel about an intellectual who discovers the inefficacy and unreliability of ideas, a revelation that comes to him when he has a minor car accident while behind the wheel with his very young daughter sitting beside him. *Saturday* not only has an epiphanic car accident; McEwan has Henry reflecting in transparently Bellovian manner, and his novel is laced with echoes of *Herzog*. This is also perhaps a way of capturing the entwined fates of England and America at this historical moment. Or maybe this respectful McEwanizing of Bellow is McEwan's answer to Martin Amis's attempts to become Bellow.

Henry, however, has something Herzog did not, which is the capacity to act consequentially on reality. He has the ability to repair a human life, even Baxter's. Yet, as McEwan stresses again and again, Henry lacks something fundamental—an artistic imagination. He hates fiction. He especially hates the characters in magical realist fiction, one of whom he found particularly galling: "one visionary saw through a pub window his parents as they had been some weeks after his conception, discussing the possibility of aborting him." The scene is from McEwan's *The Child in Time*, and Henry's aversion to it is playful proof of his distance from the author.

In fact, it is Baxter who has the artistic imagination. In a scene of terror strangely animated by the spirit of comedy, someone's recitation of Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach" has the most remarkable transforming effect on Baxter, a moment that swerves the narrative in another surprising direction.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The fact that the scene turns on Arnold, who would not have let the likes of Baxter into his front yard, amplifies its weird hidden ironies. These are the poem's famous last lines, which describe a world that

> Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
> Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
> And we are here as on a darkling plain
> Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
> Where ignorant armies clash by night.

There is no "help from pain" for poor Baxter, yet both he and Henry are living in a precarious situation in which, somewhere in the Middle East, "ignorant armies clash by night." It is not enough for decent Henry to tell himself that Baxter's desperate social situation is the caprice of a bad gene, and that therefore Henry should do all he can to help Baxter, up to the limit of his self-interest, his self-preservation. The moment created by Arnold's poem—Henry has no idea who Arnold was—proves the elusive existence in Baxter of an imaginative sympathy that is even stronger than Henry's own kindness. It proves that Baxter has an equal value as a human being, and an equal claim to the dignity society confers on Henry, no matter what Baxter's genes and social class have determined.

There are no words for the feeling that irradiates Baxter when he hears the poem. It is mute and inarticulable, a fusion of mind and matter, love and biology. This intuition embedded in the flesh is the origin of McEwan's thoroughgoing materialism, expressed with Shakespearean power at the end of *The Child in Time*, when Stephen Lewis is helping Julie, his wife, give birth and sees the head of the baby emerge:

> That it was suddenly and obviously there, a person not from another town or from a different country but from life itself, the simplicity of that, was communicating to him a clarity and precision of purpose.

That clarity and precision of purpose—to live, and to love—come to McEwan's characters only in the wake of a transfiguring event. It's these intimate catastrophes that create the hunger in all of McEwan's dark, disturbing fictions for more love, more life. How unlike the effect of 9/11, which has propelled some people past the limit of self-interest and self-preservation into the desire for more violence, and more death. This extraordinary book is not a political novel. It is a novel about consciousness that illuminates the sources of politics. ■

Dreams and Delusions

JON WIENER

California inspires people to think big, and to write big books. Take, for example, Kevin Starr. As a graduate student at Harvard in the 1960s, Starr decided to write a history of California, his home state, organized around an idea: the dream of a good life for ordinary people. Now, thirty-five years later, he is publishing the seventh volume in this series. How many historians have conceived of—much less written—a seven-volume history of anything? Gibbon did the decline of Rome in six. Schlesinger did the Age of Roosevelt in three.

Unabashedly cheerful and sunny, Starr's work has invited unfavorable comparisons with Mike Davis's more alluring California noir. The criticism has stung Starr, who acknowledges in the preface to *Coast of Dreams* that "it would be seductively easy to join the naysayers.... do this, and I would be considered a deep thinker." California in recent years—"a case study in how things could go wrong"—has sorely tested his famous optimism, what with the LA riots (1992); the Northridge earthquake (1994); massive wildfires (1991, 1993 and 2003); disastrous flooding (1992, 1995 and 1998); an epidemic of gang homicides in LA; statewide power blackouts (2001); and the recall of the governor (2003). The first page of *Coast of Dreams* finds Starr wondering whether he has "made a terrible mistake" in committing himself to this "California dream" project, whether the "radiant golden vision" of California as a paradise for ordinary people is "still worth the living, the writing, the struggle"—as if a story that isn't happy isn't worth telling.

But Starr hasn't quite given up on the dream. Defying those who have criticized his work as too rosy, he opens his book under the California sky with a chapter on surfing, unashamedly described as "a primary emblem" of "California identity." (To underscore the point, Starr put surfers on the jacket.) His strategy here is to open with a sunny picture and then bring in the threatening darkness. That worked beautifully in his last book, *Embattled Dreams: California in War and Peace, 1940–1950*, whose first chapter provided an unforgettably poignant picture of Californians at play during the summer of 1940, as the rest of the world sank into war—the Iowan migrant picnic in Long Beach, spring break in Santa Monica, the season at the Hollywood Bowl. In that chapter he asked, "Was this a delusional response—or a brave and defiant celebration of life over death?" Here the conceit seems thin, since it hinges on what's been a cliché of California life since *Gidget*.

After surfing comes a report on the state of religion in the 1990s, and here again, Starr seems to be goading his critics—all the religions of California, from Eastern Orthodoxy to Hinduism, were thriving; no shadows here. The Catholics were bringing together blacks and Latinos; not a word about priests' sexual abuse of children, which has left the Church in California facing 400 victims seeking damages totaling $160 million. Starr's Jews were flocking to museums, operas and the symphony, as well as to "delicatessens and other eat-

Jon Wiener (Wiener@uci.edu), a Nation *contributing editor, teaches history at the University of California, Irvine. His book* Historians in Trouble *was published by the New Press in January.*

BOOKS DISCUSSED IN THIS ESSAY

COAST OF DREAMS: California on the Edge, 1990–2003.
By Kevin Starr.
Knopf. 765 pp. $35.

BEASTS OF THE FIELD: A Narrative History of California Farmworkers, 1769–1913.
By Richard Steven Street.
Stanford. 904 pp. Paper $29.95.

PHOTOGRAPHING FARMWORKERS IN CALIFORNIA.
By Richard Steven Street.
Stanford. 329 pp. $39.95.

THE KING OF CALIFORNIA: J.G. Boswell and the Making of a Secret American Empire.
By Mark Arax and Rick Wartzman.
PublicAffairs. 558 pp. Paper $16.95.

THE CONQUEST OF BREAD: 150 Years of Agribusiness in California.
By Richard A. Walker.
New Press. 382 pp. $27.95.

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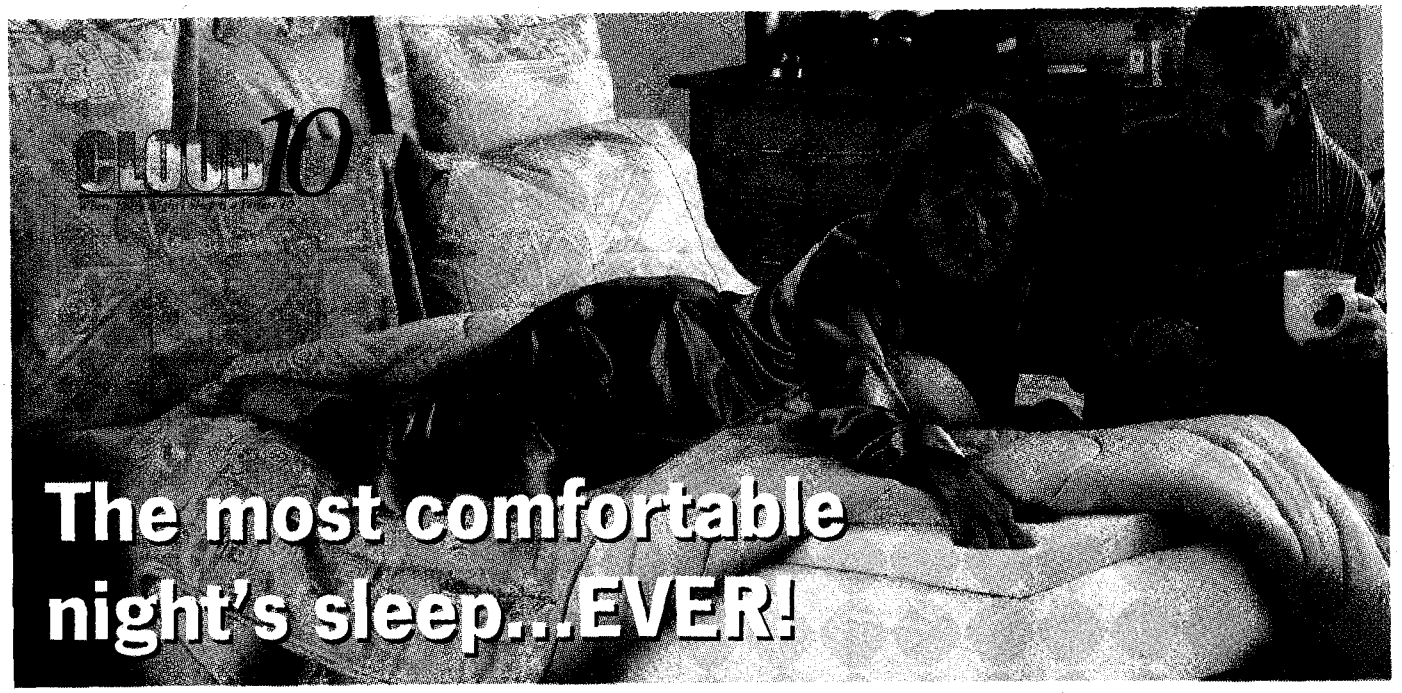

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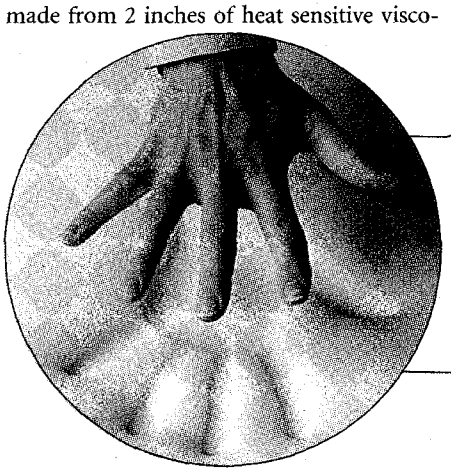

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Jonathan Tasini
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Vs.

Ben Edwards
American Business Editor, The Economist and
Steven Malanga
Senior Fellow, The Manhattan Institute

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eries"; not a word about the deep divisions among Jews over Israel. Buddhism gets eight happy paragraphs, but Islam gets only one sentence—and not until 600 pages later does Starr discuss the unprecedented legal harassment and public hostility Muslims have faced since 9/11.

The second section of the book describes California's troubles: fires, floods, earthquakes and finally riots—the ordeals that provoked Starr's soul-searching. Mike Davis covered much the same territory in *Ecology of Fear*, not just in a darker way but with a real argument: that fires and earthquakes had such a devastating effect not only because of nature's wrath but also because of policy decisions by elites that endangered ordinary people—decisions to build luxury highrises in dangerous earthquake zones, and to devote fire protection resources to upscale hillsides, where nobody should be living, rather than more populous inner-city immigrant neighborhoods.

Although *Coast of Dreams* covers Jerry Brown and Gray Davis and Arnold Schwarzenegger, it's not really about California politics—it's a cultural and social history. But Starr's cultural history isn't always sure-footed: For example, he describes Christo's 1991 yellow umbrellas in Tejon pass north of LA as "an artistic probe" into "what made California California." In fact, the umbrellas had little if anything to do with California—Christo did similar projects in Florida, Colorado and of course New York's Central Park. The error is revealing, however, of a native son who's always looking for a reason to believe in his state. Starr concludes with a cinematic image of undocumented immigrants coming to California "by foot across deadly deserts, by ship in suffocating containers, in the trunks of cars, beneath the floorboards of trucks"—"testimony" to "the persistent dream of a better life" in California. And so "the dream lives," even if the state is "on the edge."

Like Kevin Starr, Richard Steven Street dreamed of a grand California history project in grad school several decades ago—in his case, at Wisconsin in the early 1970s. His topic was farmworkers. He too has spent thirty years at work, and has now produced two volumes—a massive narrative history that tests the limits of bookbinding at 904 pages, yet only makes it up to 1913, accompanied by a wonderful volume of photographs (which is "only" 329 pages long).

Beasts of the Field, which draws inspiration from Carey McWilliams's classic 1939 exposé, *Factories in the Field*, is a magnificent work, beautifully written and exhaustively researched. You might think the story of farmworkers would be one of unchanging suffering and oppression. On the contrary, Street's book demonstrates how much difference, and how much change, can be found in that history. The story is first of all a bloody one of exploitation and resistance. For workers, writes Street, field work was a "hopelessly damaging experience" that "wore them out" and "degraded them." Resistance was typically nasty, brutish and short; Street is careful not to exaggerate its extent or effectiveness. Nevertheless, he finds varieties of tenacity, sacrifice and courage that provoke sympathy and also curiosity—how did these different workers see the world? what did it feel like? To some in the academy, these questions, which obsessed a generation of social historians influenced by E.P. Thompson's 1963 classic, *The Making of the English Working Class*, might seem "undertheorized"—naïve, even quaint. Today, "experience" has been deconstructed, along with race and masculinity, as yet another set of representations. Yet it is Street's old-fashioned commitment to describing the experience of farmworkers that has enabled him to draw such a rich portrait of their lives.

Some clichés, he finds, are true: After years of misery and exploitation, "Indians all drunk," one rancher wrote in his diary in 1861. Chinese workers "hit the pipe"—smoked opium—which wasn't even against the law until 1909. After them came the "bindlestiffs," white migrant laborers who carried all their worldly possessions in tightly wrapped blankets, or "bindles." Street's picture of the social world of the bindlestiff at the turn of the century is particularly rich: Tens of thousands of men spent the winters "laid up" in LA, San Francisco, Sacramento and elsewhere in skid-row flophouses, a world of greasy spoons, shoplifting and "Mexican bargain basement" prostitutes, where they dealt with bedbugs, bad teeth and brawling. He also shows them reading in libraries and listening to revival preachers and left-wing organizers on street corners.

Despite the brutal oppression in the fields, large-scale farming was, and is, vulnerable to strikes, because the harvest season is so short and so crucial. Throughout this history, Street finds successful harvest-time actions. The first successful unions were organized by Japanese workers who struck in 1903 in the Oxnard sugar-beet fields. The climax of the book comes with the first major attempt to organ-

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ize farmworkers by the IWW, with its songs and "soapboxers." They won in Fresno but were crushed in San Diego. In the end, officials arrested the entire leadership of the California IWW, convicted them of a criminal conspiracy and sent them all to Leavenworth prison.

Street is a photographer as well as a historian, and his companion volume of historic photographs (taken by others) is simply terrific. He's got a shocking photo from 1989 of Guatemalan migrants sleeping on a hillside above a bustling Interstate 5 north of San Diego. He's got white mobs attacking strikers in downtown Salinas in 1936. He's got beautiful shots of lettuce fields at the Manzanar camp, where Japanese-Americans were interned during World War II. He's got stately portraits of Chinese workers from the nineteenth century, and frightening pictures of naked Mexican men being sprayed with DDT in the 1950s. And he's got a photo from the moment he decided to take up his thirty-year project: July 31, 1973, helmeted sheriffs arresting a 16-year-old picketer, Marta Rodriguez, during the United Farm Workers grape strike at Giumarra vineyards—she is tiny, splattered with mud, frightened but defiant.

Street tells the story of California farmworkers in 904 pages; Mark Arax and Rick Wartzman of the *LA Times* tell the story of a single California farmer in 558 pages. But it's not just any farmer. J.G. Boswell is the biggest farmer in America. He owns 200,000 acres of America's richest farmland. He's the world's biggest cotton farmer, and he also grows more irrigated wheat, safflower and seed alfalfa than anyone else in the country. Before this book, he was unknown—which was the way he wanted it. After a lifetime of secrecy, in which he made billions of dollars with the help of massive government subsidies, he decided to talk.

Arax and Wartzman tell their story with irresistible energy and style; who would have thought a book on cotton farming could be a page-turner? Today Boswell's land in the Central Valley stretches to the horizon; it's a blank, dusty place of endless gray fields. Arax and Wartzman show what it was like before the Boswells arrived. They quote John Muir, who visited in the 1850s: The Great Central Plain of California, during the months of March, April, and May, "was one smooth, continuous bed of honey-bloom, so marvelously rich that, in walking from one end of it to the other, a distance of more than 400 miles, your foot would press about a hundred flowers at every step." And there was a huge lake there, Tulare Lake, the largest lake west of the Mississippi, 800 square miles. The Boswells drained it—it took them sixty years. Then they got the government to dam the rivers that flowed into the lake—enormous rivers. Draining the lake and damming the rivers made Boswell a billionaire; it also brought environmental disaster to the region.

In the spring, the fish come back to the miles of irrigation trenches, followed in the summer heat by massive fish kills in the stagnant channels. Arax and Wartzman describe one day in 1997 when a twenty-five-mile canal filled with threadfin shad, belly up. Also, the spring rain and irrigation runoff create ponds—but the Boswell ponds are not like Walden Pond. They contain "a toxic gumbo" contaminated by selenium and other salts. Ducks nest in the ponds, and later in the spring their offspring are hatched—with no eyes, no beaks, no wings. (Environmentalists have forced Boswell to establish some mitigation habitat.)

One-third of the food that Americans eat is grown in California, and that's not just because of fertile valleys and good weather.

The key to Boswell's empire was damming the rivers. The key question is how he got control of so much water. That was the achievement of his uncle "J.G. the First," also known as "the Colonel," a Georgia cotton farmer chased west in the 1920s by the boll weevil. He grafted plantation culture onto California, down to sipping mint juleps on the front porch. His particular talent lay in taking advantage of the Depression to purchase water rights along the Kings River from the Portuguese farmers who were going broke there.

The second key to Boswell's success was enlisting help from Uncle Sam, starting with the New Deal. Government policy at the time enforced acreage limitations on the farms using government water. Boswell fought FDR and Truman; his hold on the water was not secured until 1980, when he finally got his land exempted from acreage limitations. The culprit here was not Ronald Reagan but Jimmy Carter.

The base of the Boswell empire is the town of Corcoran—a classic company town mired in poverty and unemployment. In an effort to bring jobs that paid better than Boswell did, the Boswells got their friends in Sacramento to build a maximum-security prison there in the late 1980s. It became notorious as a place where guards set up fights between inmates and then used the fighting as an excuse to shoot and kill them. The guards at Corcoran killed more inmates in the 1990s than at any other prison in America. As for bringing prosperity to the town, that didn't work. The guards don't live in town; they commute from Fresno.

One-third of the food that Americans eat is grown in California. That's not just because of fertile valleys and good weather, as Richard Walker explains in *The Conquest of Bread*, an authoritative account of the achievements, and the human environmental costs, of California's agribusiness. A professor of geography at Berkeley, Walker looks deeply into each step in the chain of the agro-industrial cornucopia, from the biological engineering of crops, to the banks that finance the farms, to the world's largest water storage and transfer system, to the vast army of migrant workers who pick the crops, to the role of supermarkets in shaping consumption.

The book combines incisive economic analysis with vivid writing, scholarship with passion. Walker opens with childhood memories of driving through the Central Valley on summer vacations, when the windshield and grill would be plastered with bugs; that doesn't happen anymore, because pesticides have eliminated the bugs—along with "much of the rest of the wildlife." Page after page is filled with surprises: California leads the nation in no less than seventy-six crops—not just lettuce and grapes but also goat's milk and honey. California's leading export crops are not lettuce and grapes but almonds and cotton.

The title *The Conquest of Bread* comes from a forgotten book by the Russian anarchist and revolutionary Peter Kropotkin, a contemporary of Lenin who put cooperative rural development at the center of his analysis. It was a utopia that seemed hopelessly obsolete, until the antiglobalization protests against the World Trade Organization over the past few years made the idea seem relevant again. Walker writes as part of that movement, against the "unrestrained, naked form of market society," with its "ferocious exploitation of harvest labor"; he wants to help "stop the juggernaut" of agribusiness—and still feed the world. *The Conquest of Bread* provides a compelling example of how to think big about California, and a crucial contribution to a California dream that's different from Kevin Starr's. ■

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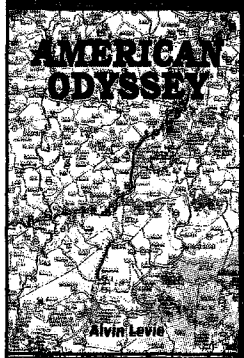

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BRIAN MORTON

DAVID S. WARE

When David Spencer Ware was a baby, his mother pronounced a blessing over him. *Go See the World* became the title of the saxophonist's first major-label record, for Columbia. Now, his new three-CD set suggests that he may have taken her mission statement a step further. It's possible, of course, to read a title like *Live in the World* in two ways. On one level it's straightforwardly descriptive—these are live dates recorded in Switzerland and Italy. But it also sounds like an injunction not to overlook the near-at-hand.

That might strike an unexpected note for those who know—or think they know—Ware as a remote, otherworldly artist. The inside jacket of *Live in the World* (Thirsty Ear) features a passionate prayer to Lord Ganesh, one of the five principal Hindu deities. And Ware has long had a penchant for allusions to the cosmos, karmic responsibilities and occult rhythms. But let's be clear: However mystical and spiritually inclined, David Ware is also profoundly committed to the basic mechanics of jazz music, its nuts and bolts, and its history. This is, after all, a man whose absorption in Eastern religions and Vedic astrology is balanced by a passion for the race cars he used to watch throwing up dust around Plainfield, New Jersey—a spiritualist who has spent much of his spare time shooting his rifle at target ranges.

A casual exposure to some of Ware's earlier records—*Flight of I* (1991), *Third Ear Recitation* (1992) and *Earthquation* (1995) or the titanic *Godspelized* (1998)—might lead you to think that his work merely picks up where John Coltrane left off. The fact that Ware has worked for the past fifteen years in the same format as the classic Coltrane quartet—tenor saxophone, piano, bass, drums—does little to dispel this impression. Not surprisingly, he is often described as a latter-day exponent of the restless, questing, avant-garde jazz of the 1960s known as Fire Music, and as an heir to its Holy Trinity—Coltrane, Pharoah Sanders and Albert Ayler. It's an association that irritates him, despite his abundant admiration for these musicians, because his thinking has evolved beyond their often troubled investigations and because his influences are much more various and also more traditional in nature.

Listen closer to Ware's stentorian tenor and you will hear unmistakable echoes of Coleman Hawkins and Ben Webster, the two figures who arguably gave his instrument its authority as a solo voice in jazz. You will also hear echoes of that great 1960s eccentric, the multireedist Rahsaan Roland Kirk, who was especially fond of those bastard children of the saxophone family, the manzello and the stritch, and who was among the first musicians to call jazz "black classical music." Playing those uncertainly pitched horns, as Ware did in his early solo efforts, might have been a creative blind alley. Kirk's cultural pride certainly was not.

Yet these influences go only so far in explaining Ware's art, which comes from a place deep within, the result of constant practice and experiment rather than evenings studying old *Impulse!* records. It was not until the mid-1980s, when he was well into his 30s, that he developed his mature style—comparatively late for a jazz musician. The era of high-velocity, cacophonous loft jazz was coming to an end, and Ware began deliberately to slow down his previously dense harmonic thinking so that the contours of chords and the dramatic topography of a song could emerge from the mists. No longer interested in simply developing his own version of the extreme chromaticism and microtonality associated with Coltrane, Sanders and Ayler, he started to analyze the basic intervals that make up jazz and to reexamine their role in his improvisation, in search of a musical language that was still profound and expressive but also more straightforward.

At the same time, he began to rethink jazz's use of standard song forms, much as Coltrane did with his extraordinary decon-

Brian Morton is the co-author of The Penguin Guide to Jazz on CD.

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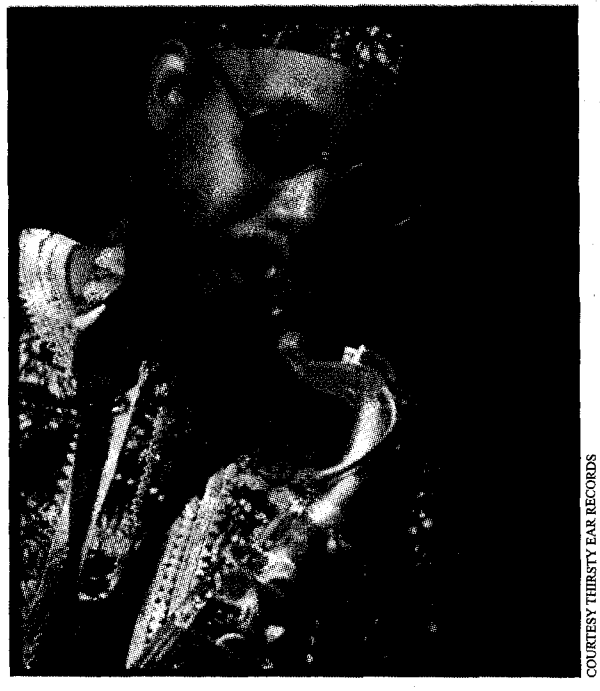
structions of Broadway songs like "My Favorite Things" and "The Inch Worm." But where Coltrane took a Rodgers and Hammerstein tune, bent it to the wayward pitching of a soprano saxophone, stretched it extravagantly and made it sound like some mournful Indian raga, Ware has taken songs like "Autumn Leaves," "Tenderly" and "The Way We Were" and made them sound almost symphonic. Thanks to his phenomenal saxophone technique, which allows him to imply chords as well as single lines, and his empathy with the group, he is able to develop simultaneous lines of musical inquiry rather than simply running through a song's harmonic structure. And yet he never loses track of the song. Refined, linear and firmly anchored in a structure even at his most intense and frantic, Ware's approach to standards owes less to Coltrane than to his mentor Sonny Rollins, the forgotten giant of postwar American jazz.

David Ware was born in New Jersey in 1949. At the age of 9 he began playing saxophone—literally playing, by his own account: no tunes, no structure, no accompaniment, just the solitary sound of a horn. It's a discipline he has explored on occasion since, as on the unaccompanied *From Silence to Music* (1978) and *Live in the Netherlands* (2001). At 17 Ware enrolled at the Berklee School of Music in Boston and began a period of formal training. He appeared on record for the first time in 1968, on a session called *The Third World* led by alto saxophonist and flautist Abdul Hannan. Along with pianist Cooper-Moore and drummer Marc Edwards, Ware formed a group called Apogee, which also seems to have recorded. In 1973 Ware moved to New York City and distinguished himself in some of the best free-jazz groups of the day, including pianist Cecil Taylor's Unit and the drummer Andrew Cyrille's brilliant Maono ensemble.

Not until 1977 did Ware make an album under his own name. *The Birth of a Being* was issued on Hat Hut, a new label based in Switzerland, after Ware's work with the Unit came to the attention of the label's owner, Werner Uehlinger, a sponsor of Taylor's music. The following year Ware recorded a set of solo saxophone pieces and saxophone/cello duets with Jean-Charles Capon for the tiny European label Palm. These associations established a pattern still reflected in the provenance of the *Live in the World* tapes—Chiasso in Switzerland, Terni and Milan in Italy. Like many of his predecessors, Ware has long been as well-known across the Atlantic as at home, and perhaps more widely admired, and he spends much of his time in Paris.

What's more significant about the solo pieces on Palm's *From Silence to Music* is that apart from the significantly titled "From Deep Within," they are all still standard repertory songs—"Deep Purple," "Prelude to a Kiss" and Jimmy Van Heusen's "It Could Happen to You"—a clear sign that even before his major stylistic overhaul Ware was thinking in terms of conventional structures, however unconventionally played.



COURTESY THIRSTY EAR RECORDS

David S. Ware

Living in the world is not always easy, and the period from 1978–88 were lean years for Ware. Though he practiced continually and clocked up important credits with Cyrille and a range of European improvisers, he was forced to earn his living as a messenger, delivery man and taxi driver. In 1988 Ware struck out anew, releasing his own *Passage to Music* on Silkheart, the first in a series of markedly personal albums. The quartet on *Live in the World* is essentially the group he has worked with since his Silkheart debut. It was a trio before the pianist Matthew Shipp came on board to record *Great Bliss: Volume 1 & 2* in 1990. The band's anchor is William Parker, arguably the most influential bassist in free jazz today, and perhaps the most prolific. Like Ware, he has explored freedom and structure in equal measure, and has performed both as a soloist and as a leader of his own groups, notably the Little Huey Creative Music Orchestra, an enormous ensemble of improvisers. Parker's sonorous articulation is in a direct line from classic bassists like Jimmy Blanton, keystone of the greatest Duke Ellington band; Wilbur Ware, who worked with Thelonious Monk and Sonny Rollins; and Paul Chambers, one of the stars of Miles Davis's *Kind of Blue* quintet. A stalwart from the Apogee days, Marc Edwards was the first drummer, replaced in turn by Whit Dickey, Susie Ibarra, Hamid Drake and Guillermo E. Brown, the latter three of whom appear on *Live in the World*.

Each of these fine percussionists brings a different sensibility to the Ware quartet, from florid (Ibarra), to fiery (Drake), to deliberately understated (Brown). Yet all of them are keenly attuned in their individual ways to Ware's peculiar demands. The role of the percussionist in Ware's groups is not so much to propel Ware's playing as to surround it with rhythmic energy—to draw an analogy with the Coltrane bands of the mid-1960s, it's more like Rashied Ali's role than Elvin Jones's. Instead of playing one meter against another—the essence of Jones's polyrhythmic approach—they seem to play several simultaneously and in such a way as to give the music a rich, complex pulse that is virtually impossible to count off in the conventional way. All three perform superbly and idiomatically.

There's some older material here—"Elder's Path" from *Passage to Music*, "Co Co Cana" from the mid-1990s—but Ware's approach has become more open and loose-limbed, his sound less clotted, particularly in the quartet's joyful rendition of Sonny Rollins's classic 1958 "Freedom Suite." In a nearly twenty-minute performance of "The Way We Were," the band transforms the song made famous by Barbra Streisand into a thing of brooding, turbulent majesty. Throughout the record, Ware and his bandmates call on a shared pool of ideas and structures. Shipp is a masterful accompanist, offering the kind of harmonic sophistication McCoy Tyner brought to the Coltrane quartet, but also something of Cecil Taylor's rhythmic dissonance. In recent years, Shipp has flirted with electronic keyboards, but the miracle of his approach is that he is able to create the same ambiguous

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tonality and multilayered sound on a conventional (and sometimes, as on one of these dates, a not very responsive) piano. He bends and splits the harmonies in exactly the way that percussionists multiply their rhythms. He and bassist William Parker put in especially strong solos on the second and third parts of "Freedom Suite," but it's their ensemble work that's most impressive.

The same applies to Ware himself. One of the more obvious differences between the 1998 material and the Italian concerts five years later is how even and contained his articulation has become, how fluidly it meshes with the rhythm section. There's no less fury, but his lines have become much less abstract, and he seems more interested in playing with his band than in towering above it by the sheer force of his horn. Like a number of critics, I cynically assumed that the more "inside" approach on Ware's disappointing *Surrendered*, his last record for Columbia, reflected the wishes of the label. Judging by these performances, he was moving in that direction entirely on his own—and without compromising his art in the least.

Live in the World is a valuable document from a musician who is now in his mid-50s but still too often treated like an up-and-coming talent. Lord Ganesh seems exactly the right tutelary deity for the record and for the career as a whole. The son of Shiva and Parvati, he is the god of success, knowledge and education, the sweeper away of evils and obstacles. The broken tusk he carries in his right hand is the instrument he used to inscribe the Mahabharata, a damaged symbol of sacrifice. He rides on the back of a mouse, a surreal and anomalous image but a reminder of the elephant god's basic humility and his unexpected lightness.

Like the elephant and his trunk—depicted as a saxophone on the cover of *Live in the World*—the man and his horn now seem indivisible. Ware's music breaks down the artificial obstacles that still separate "avant-garde" jazz from the mainstream. He can journey for many illuminating minutes on a pop theme as common as a mouse. And in the course of a career that has involved considerable sacrifice and humility, he has created a body of work that is—uniquely on the current scene—epic. His work doesn't just fulfill the mission his mother bequeathed him but extends it: not just to see the world, but to live in it, fully and intensely, aware that it's not the only reality, simply the most immediately pressing one. ■

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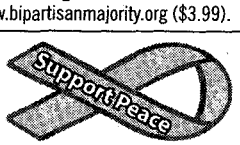

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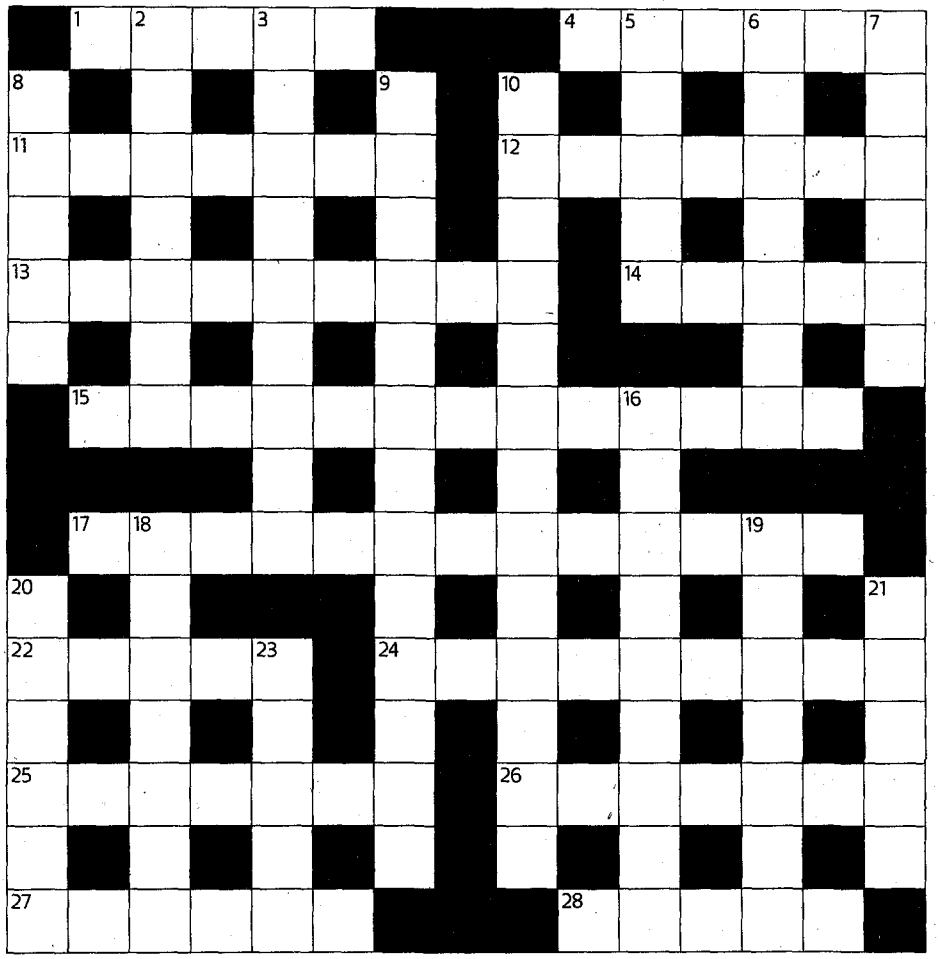

ACROSS

4 and **1** How to hold somebody in *Arsenic and Old Lace*? Dig it? (6,5)

11 Take money illegally back to a Commander in Chief, which could be a clear-as-crystal description. (7)

12 For the purpose of making a count on something complete? (7)

13 It separates a couple of cavities in the body, but Grampa hid the result, possibly. (9)

14 Doctrine exemplified by Lassie having puppies? (5)

15 Does it involve the mincing of words? (13)

17 They're required in minute quantities for physiological functioning, being a way to track weather, as they say. (5,8)

22 and **24** Based on Coward's *Still Life,* it described a very short meeting. (5,9)

25 Cutting down on the intake, I would shortly bring it back to get in, perhaps. (7)

26 One who went to a famous school is a quantity unknown in a sort of tear-jerker. (7)

27 Susie incorrectly follows a large number to make an improper application of it... (6)

28 ...according to custom (of the American era)! (5)

DOWN

2 By this or that time, the real day is not clearly apparent. (7)

3 One can't just stop with a small nip. (9)

5 Took part in something, or for somebody. (5)

6 Everything that has gore spilled should call for rather fast movement. (7)

7 However, it doesn't specify a particular direction. (6)

8 Put up with something—just as a way to live. (5)

9 So-called military gold braid, but you don't have to be a soldier to make a mess of them. (9,4)

10 A cat shows anger about a number, with one who behaved like 5, being the source of power. (6,7)

16 The clue may be a little shaky, but rules out M as a possibility. (9)

18 Possibly a football team—like the Vikings! (7)

19 The object about it implies giving up a decimal part. (7)

20 In the aforementioned place, I make an offer to put them, colloquially. (6)

21 However, it doesn't necessarily stigmatize the name of the product! (5)

23 The files have to be sorted for what time does, supposedly. (5)

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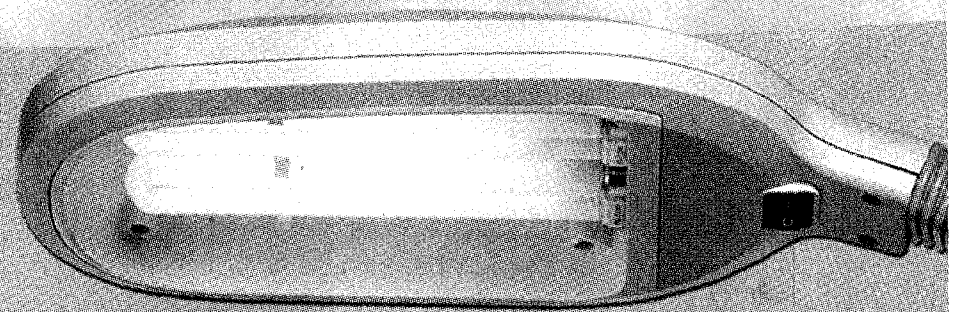

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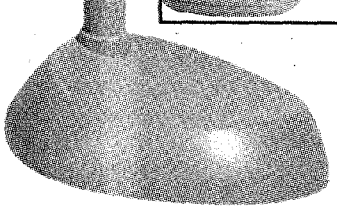

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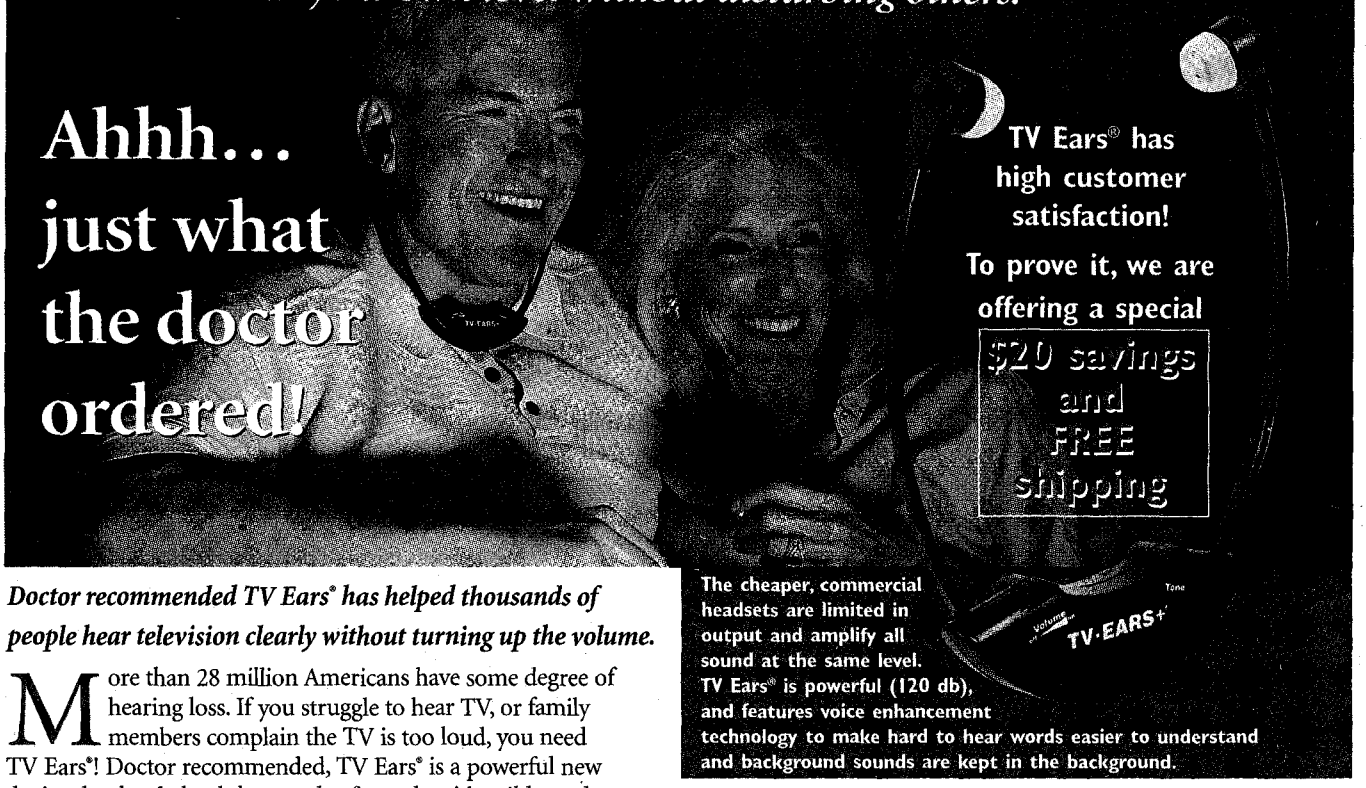

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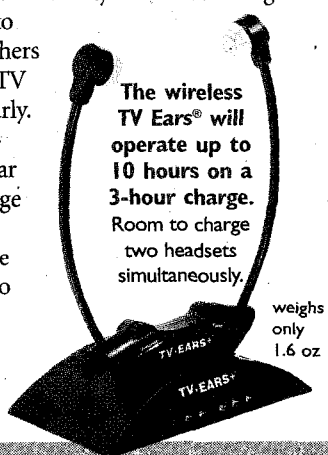

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- **Television Audio Processing.** (TAP) The transmitter processes the audio from your TV or other audio devices and amplifies regular dialogue, hard to hear voices, and whispers.
- **Automatic Volume Control.** (AVC) Selectively compresses loud bursts of volume that are annoying when watching a program, channel surfing, or during commercials.
- **Infrared technology.** TV Ears' infrared technology provides safe, superior sound quality without interference and frequency drifting. Transmits up to 900 sq. ft.
- **Left-Right balance control.** Allows you to adjust the volume for rich, high-quality sound in both ears.
- **Individual controls.** Multiple headsets can be adjusted to the user's personal needs.
- **Long-lasting charge.** You can quickly charge two headsets at the same time, and TV-Ears will function up to 10 hours on a 3-hour charge. Charger included.

Bringing the clear voice directly to your ears!

"My wife and I have used them [TV Ears®] almost daily for the past two years and find them an invaluable help in our enjoyment of television—we would not be without them. As a retired otologist, I heartily recommend TV Ears® to people with normal hearing as well as those with hearing loss."

—Robert F., M.D., California

Try them yourself! If you aren't totally amazed...send them back! We're so sure you'll be absolutely astonished with the increase in sound and clarity when using the TV Ears®, that we're backing them with *first*STREET's exclusive in-home 90-day trial. If you aren't completely satisfied, simply return them for the product purchase price.

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